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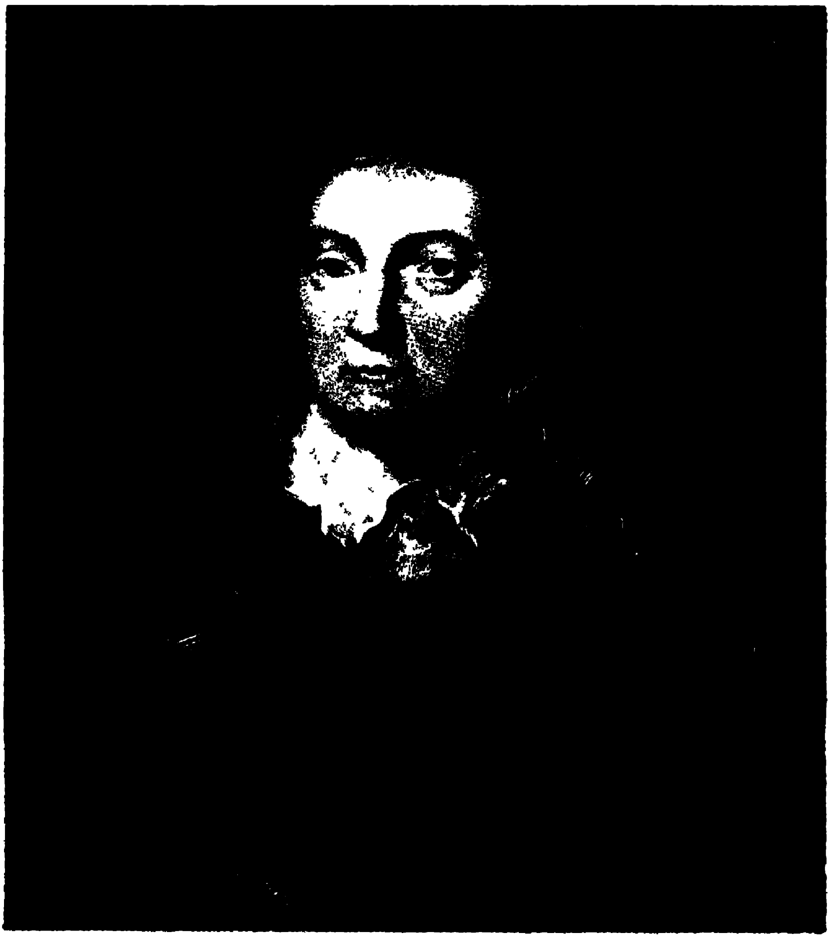
POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN MILTON.

DUBLIN:

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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN MILTON.

EDITED BY

SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, BART.

Is not each great, each amiable Muse
Of classic ages in our MILTON met?
A genius universal as his theme;
Astonishing as Chaos; as the bloom
Of blowing Eden fair; as Heaven sublime!—THOMSON.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS FROM DRAWINGS BY J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

A New Edition.

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MDCCCLXII.

TO

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH AND ROBERT SOUTHEY

This Volume

IS APPROPRIATELY DEDICATED

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION

At the close of a Work, which has, during its publication, been the object of his unceasing care and anxiety, the publisher trusts to be forgiven, if he intrudes himself for a moment to return thanks for the generous assistance with which he has been favoured in an undertaking, which circumstances have happily rendered to him a "labour of love."

To endeavour to remedy that which has been well denominated by the first literary authority in England, "a disgraceful defect in literature"—the want of such an edition, as, he flatters himself, the present will be found—to restore MILTON's lofty poems to their original purity: bringing them, by means of luminous critical and explanatory notes, within the comprehension of his humblest countrymen, and at a price which will enable all to become possessed of them;—in fine, to do justice to the fame of the greatest epic poet of any age or country, by removing the prejudices which party zeal and hate had heaped on his memory:—was pronounced a bold, if not an impracticable undertaking. That the publisher has been enabled to achieve all this, and bring the work to a triumphant close (although at an outlay which must, in the event of failure, have been ruinous), will ever be to him a source of the proudest gratulation. That he has done so, he has the collective testimony of the press, without a single exception,—of an already extensive and daily

increasing circulation,—of many distinguished friends, whose expressions of approbation, and still more substantial aid, he regrets he is not permitted to acknowledge more openly.

He takes, however, this opportunity of expressing his general obligations to his reviewers, as well as to those whose private applause is equally gratifying. To the venerable and highly-endowed Editor, Sir Egerton Brydges, for his unwearied labour, research, and assiduity—to the Laureate, but for whose kindly encouragement and countenance, it is probable the issue would not have been contemplated—to the classical taste and research of Mr. James Boaden, by whom the text has been diligently collated and revised from every existing edition, and whose critical sagacity has enabled him to detect many glaring errors in the established readings—to Mr. Allan Cunningham, for his pleasant traditionary notes on "Comus"—to Mr. Turner, whose imaginative genius has never been more brilliantly displayed than in his illustrations of Milton—to the Engravers, whose innate conception of the beauties of this great painter has long stamped them as the first artists in the kingdom—to Mr. Valpy, from whose well-known classic press the work has proceeded, and from whose personal attention it has so largely benefited—to each and all the publisher can but offer his gratitude:—any encomium from him would be idle impertinence.

With these advantages; enriched by all that scholarship, art, beauty of materials, and elegance of exterior can bestow; this (it may without presumption be named) FIRST COMPLETE AND PERFECT EDITION OF THE POETICAL WORKS OF MILTON is ushered to public approbation and patronage.

3, SAINT JAMES'S SQUARE,
November, 1835.

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My task [illegible] is done. No [illegible]
Remains my mighty labour to conclude.
In sickness, in calamity, in age,
And destitution,—in a foreign clime,
I have gone through my work [illegible]
Though sometimes by my fear or toil subdued
And sometimes dazzled by the heavenly page,
I have sunk lifeless at its rays sublime.
Oft did I pause, and oft despondent turned,
Ere yet I entered on the dread career;
But fitfully the flame within me burned.
Yet now and then a spirit to mine ear
Came, and thus said as by a voice from Heaven —
'Follow thy youthful vow and thou shalt be forgiven.'

GENEVA,
October, 1835.

LIFE OF MILTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE POET'S BIRTH—CHARACTER OF THE TIMES—HIS EARLY EDUCATION AND PROPENSITIES.

THE nativity of JOHN MILTON was cast at an epoch when mighty events were brewing in the political institutions of England, and when poetry had been advanced to greater perfection than it has ever since reached, except by his own voice. Spenser had not been dead ten years, and Shakspeare was yet living. In these two all the inexhaustible abundance of poetical thought, imagery, and language was to be found, even if all other fountains had been shut.

It was a stirring time for all minds, in every department. The whole reign of Queen Elizabeth had been full of gallantry, adventure, and great-mindedness;—of all that captivates the imagination, and all that exercises and elevates the understanding and it was as profound in learning as original and brilliant in native faculties of the intellect but there was the leaven of an unholy and factious spirit mixed with it. The Puritans had been working under-ground and above-ground with incessant industry, intrigue, and talent; nor were the Papists more quiet.

Amid these fermenting elements of discord, grown into a frightful strength under the government of the pusillanimous, indiscreet, and pedantic monarch, James I., was our great poet born on the 9th of December, 1608, in the parish of Allhallows, Bread-street, London; the son of John Milton, scrivener. His mother's name was Caston, derived, according to the best authority, from a Welsh family.*

Milton's grandfather was under-ranger of the forest of Shotover, near Halton, in Oxfordshire, in which neighbourhood his family was ancient, but had lost their estates in the civil contests of the houses of York and Lancaster. This grandfather was a rigid Papist; and, having disinherited his son for embracing the Protestant faith, though he had educated him at Christ Church, Oxford, this disinherison drove him to the meaner profession of a scrivener.

His father was advanced to more than a middle age when the poet was born. He was eminent for his skill in music.

It is a curious question, how far accidental circumstances operated on the bent and colours of Milton's genius. Probably he was early educated in Puritan principles. His earliest tutor, Young, was a rigid and zealous Puritan, yet there are many traits in his early taste and early poems which make us hesitate as to his boyish attachment to this sect. His ruling love of poetry and classical erudition was not very congenial with it: his love of the theatre, and all feudal and chivalrous magnificence, was alien to it. There are, however, a few passages in his Lycidas concordant with it.

It does not seem to me that there are any traces of these Calvinistic prejudices at the time he visited Italy, unless his friendship to Charles Deodate be a sign of it; which, I think, looking at the poetical addresses to him, it is not. The nature of Milton's lofty temper, which could not endure submission even to college discipline, is the more probable cause.

As the resistance to monarchical authority grew daily bolder, more obstinate, and more bitter, the chance is that Milton heated his mind, and became more fixed in his native love of liberty and self-government. As he was a reader of the most abstruse books, he entangled himself in the webs of controversy.

* What becomes of the heralds, who always omit what they most ought to tell? Witness the details of pedigree of Spenser, and Milton, both of gentilitial descent; and the chief of the former living at that time in great affluence and magnificence at Althorp, allied to all the highest nobility!

When King James died, March 27th, 1625, Milton was yet a boy, aged sixteen. That monarch could impress upon the poet nothing but scorn and hatred: his tyranny provoked rebellion; his cowardice encouraged it: his odious and imbecile pedantry was in itself a ground of aversion, to a great mind: and these unlucky aids were added to a flame already strong enough to burst from its bondage. The character of the court was notoriously corrupt and profligate: the favourite Villiers was alone sufficient to rouse all great and good minds against it: the preceding favourite, Carr, had been still worse: there was not only a want of principle, but of talent, in the administration. England had become the laughing-stock of foreign powers: the internal policy was full of vicious abuses: the gentry were discontented; their swords were rusting, and *parvenus* began to mount over their heads; the order of knighthood was cheapened and prostituted: the Church lost the veneration it had till now possessed; and sects, that had hitherto lurked in holes and corners, arose and displayed themselves openly.

The cruel and infamous sacrifice of the life of the heroic Sir Walter Raleigh had filled the nation with horror and disgust; and Bacon's mixture of glory and littleness had taken from high station half its respect and all its splendour. All the relics of the public men of Queen Elizabeth's lofty reign had gradually disappeared. Buckhurst, Cecil, Egerton, Coke, the great navigators and soldiers; the gallant courtiers of ancient nobility; and all the leading names of commoners, rich in domains as well as in blood,—who carried more respect and influence than most of the best of modern nobility. Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, was immured a prisoner in the Tower: the head of the Howards had not recovered attainder and confiscation: the Veres, Cliffords, Nevills, Staffords, &c., were all impoverished; the Courtenays had lost all their honours: young Essex was oppressed, insulted, and spurned. The sharers of the spoils of Church lands alone of the former century were rich.

This state of things encouraged those political opinions which Milton's tutor, Young, had probably instilled into him: but his acquaintance with the Countess of Derby at Harefield, and the Earl of Bridgewater, her son-in-law, must be supposed to have counteracted them for a time.

There can be little doubt that the poet's travels to Italy increased this counteraction. Milton left England in 1638, in his thirtieth year; was presented to Grotius, at Paris, by Lord Scudamore, the English ambassador; proceeded to Nice, embarked for Genoa, and thence through Leghorn and Pisa to Florence. Here he stayed two months: hence he passed through Sienna to Rome, where he stayed another two months. On quitting Rome he visited Naples: it was his purpose also to have visited Sicily and Athens; but the intelligence of the disturbances which had broken out in his own country made him think of home.

He passed back through Rome, where he again stayed two months; and then again to Florence, where also he stopped two months. He now visited Lucca; then went across the Apennines, by Bologna and Ferrara, to Venice: here he sojourned for a month; and then travelled by Verona and Milan to Geneva. His way back lay through France; having been absent about fifteen months.

I have brought these facts together rather out of order, because I believe they were the preservatives of Milton's poetical genius against his *political* adoptions. I now go back to his earliest manhood. From school the poet was sent to Christ's College, Cambridge, in February, 1624, æt. 16, just before King James's death. Already, or about this time, he had commenced his poetical character, for he had paraphrased two of the Psalms, cxiv. and cxxxvi. In this latter are some fine stanzas, indicative of the character of his future genius; witness this speaking of the Creator:—

Who by his wisdom did create
The painted heavens so full of state:
Who did the solid earth ordain
To rise above the watery main:
Who by his all-commanding might
Did fill the new-made world with light,
And caused the golden-tressed sun
All the day long his course to run;
The horned moon to shine by night
Amongst her spangled sisters bright.

He with his thunder-clasping hand
Smote the first-born of Egypt land;
And, in despite of Pharaoh fell,
He brought from thence his Israel.
The ruddy waves he cleft in twain
Of the Erythræan main:
The floods stood still, like walls of glass,
While the Hebrew bands did pass:
But full soon they did devour
The tawny king with all his power.
His chosen people he did bless
In the wasteful wilderness:
In bloody battle he brought down
Kings of prowess and renown:
He foil'd both Seon and his host,
That ruled the Amorrean coast;
And large-limb'd Og he did subdue,
With all his over-hardy crew;
And to his servant Israel
He gave their land, therein to dwell.

In 1625 also Milton wrote his poem "On the Death of a Fair Infant dying of a Cough," said to be his niece, daughter of his sister Phillips. It has some fine stanzas, but a little quaint and far-fetched. Take these for instance:—

V.

Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,
  Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb;
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,
  Hid from the world in a low-delved tomb.
  Could heaven, for pity, thee so strictly doom?
Oh, no! for something in thy face did shine
Above mortality, that show'd thou wast divine.

VI.

Resolve me, then, O soul most purely bless'd!
  (If so it be that thou these plaints dost hear.)
Tell me, bright spirit, where'er thou hoverest,
  Whether above that high first-moving sphere,
  Or in the Elysian fields, if such there were;
Oh, say me true, if thou wert mortal wight,
And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight?

Thomas Warton observes of this Ode, that "on the whole, from a boy of seventeen, it is an extraordinary effort of fancy, expression, and versification: even in the conceits, which are many, we perceive strong and peculiar marks of genius. I think Milton has here given a very remarkable specimen of his ability to succeed in the Spenserian stanza: he moves with great ease and address amidst the embarrassment of a frequent return of rhyme."

Several other poems of Milton, both English and Latin, were written at college: from all these extraordinary compositions it appears that the tone, richness, and character of Milton's genius were always the same from the age of fifteen; and probably even much earlier: it was always mixed up with both classical and abstruse learning; and with an infusion from the poetry of the Bible. His Latin verses had less of the wild, the sublime, and the visionary than his English, which of course arose from the difference of his models, and the different characters of the respective languages. The feudal institutions, the enthusiasm and splendour of chivalry, and the superstitions of the dark ages, had introduced a new school of poetry in Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Sackville, Spenser, and Shakspeare, more suited to Milton's genius; which yet he was deterred from introducing in compositions, where he endeavoured to rival the ancient classics. There is more of what would be by cold minds called sober thoughts, sentiments, and images in his Latin productions than in his vernacular; but there certainly is not the same raciness, vigour, and picturesqueness.

His Epistles to his friend Charles Deodate are, indeed, very beautiful: they relate his studies, his amusements, his feelings, his ambitions; but these have more of amiable virtue in them than of imaginative richness.

From one of these poems it comes out that he was rusticated from his college: the cause has been speculated upon with various comments and conclusions, according to the tempers and political and personal prejudices of the censors; but I have no doubt that Mr. Mitford's opinion is the correct one. Milton, with a haughty spirit, and consciousness of his own great genius and learning, would not submit to academical discipline. The line—

Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo—

obviously means nothing but a repugnance to the observation of those petty formalities and rules which irritate and insult great minds: it is absurd to construe it to have been corporal punishment

He retired to his father's villa at Horton, near Colebrook, in Middlesex, glad to quit the dulness of the reedy Cam; and gave himself up entirely to the literature of his own taste in his exile—except during occasional visits to the capital, to enjoy the theatres and the conversation of his friends. His college was glad to have him back again, conscious of the honour he did them by his mighty gifts and acquirements of intellect. But at Horton he says of himself,

Tempora nam licet hic placidis dare libera Musis,
Et totum rapiunt me, mea vita, libri.
Excipit hinc fessum sinuosi pompa theatri,
Et vocat ad plausus garrula scena suos.

Warton says, "Milton's Latin poems may be justly considered as legitimate classical compositions, and are never disgraced with such language and such imagery as Cowley's. Cowley's Latinity, dictated by an irregular and unrestrained imagination, presents a mode of diction, half Latin and half English. It is not so much that Cowley wanted a knowledge of the Latin style, but that he suffered that knowledge to be perverted and corrupted by false and extravagant thoughts. Milton was a more perfect scholar than Cowley, and his mind was more deeply tinctured with the excellences of ancient literature: he was a more just thinker, and therefore a more just writer: in a word, he had more taste, and more poetry, and consequently more propriety. If a fondness for the Italian writers has sometimes infected his English poetry with false ornaments, his Latin verses, both in diction and sentiment, are at least free from gross depravations.

"Some of Milton's Latin poems were written in his first year at Cambridge, when he was only seventeen: they must be allowed to be very correct and manly performances for a youth of that age; and, considered in that view, they discover an extraordinary copiousness and command of ancient fable and history. I cannot but add that Gray resembles Milton in many instances, among others, in their youth they were both strongly attached to the cultivation of Latin poetry."

Such was Milton's boyhood and youth; so predominant was his genius from the first. It was at Horton that Milton seems to have meditated an Epic poem on King Arthur, or some other part of the old British story. See "Epitaphium Damonis" (Deodatus), and "Epistola ad Mansum."

In his "Elegia in adventum Veris," written in his twentieth year, the poet tells us that his poetical powers revived with the spring.

Milton's early love of the theatre has been already mentioned; Wharton also observes this, and refers to "L'Allegro," v. 131: but in another place the critic remarks, that his warmest poetical predilections were at last totally obliterated by civil and religious enthusiasm. Milton's writings afford a striking example of the strength and weakness of the same mind. Seduced by the gentle eloquence of fanaticism, he listened no more to the "wild and native wood-notes of Fancy's child." In his "Iconoclastes" he censures King Charles for studying "one, whom we well know was the closet companion of his solitudes, William Shakspeare."

Nothing could be farther than Milton was, in his own early poetry, from this sour puritanism. In his "Ode at a Solemn Musick," he addresses "the harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse," to "wed their divine sounds."—

And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure concent,
Aye sung before the sapphire-colour'd throne
To him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee;

Where the bright Seraphim, in burning row,
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow;
And the cherubick host, in thousand quires,
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly, &c.

Here is an anticipation of the "Paradise Lost."

Again: in his "Address to his Native Language," at a vacation exercise in the College, anno ætatis 19, he says,—

But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
And from thy wardrobe bring thy choicest treasure;
Not those new-fangled toys and trimming slight,
Which takes our late fantasticks with delight;
But cull those richest robes and gayest attire,
Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire.
Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
Thy service in some graver subject use;
Such as may make thee search thy coffers round
Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound:
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door
Look in, and see each blissful deity,
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings
To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
Immortal nectar to her kingly sire: &c.

"Here," Warton again observes, "are strong indications of a young mind, anticipating the subject of the 'Paradise Lost,' if we substitute Christian for Pagan ideas. He was now deep in the Greek poets."

The style, the picturesqueness of language, the character of the imagery, which Milton adopted from the first, was peculiar to himself. I do not say that many of the words, and even images, might not be found scattered in preceding poets, as Spenser, Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Joshua Sylvester's Du Bartas: but they could not be found combined into a uniform and unbroken texture, nor with the same uniformity of elevated and spiritual thought. In almost all precedent poets they are patches. That Milton was minutely familiar with the poems of all his celebrated predecessors is sufficiently evident: but so far as he used them, he only used them as ingredient particles. Spenser is rich and picturesque, but Milton has a character distinct from him. Milton's texture is more massy: the gold is weightier; he has a haughtier solemnity.

CHAPTER II.

CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF MILTON'S COLLEGE POETRY.

Though there were many things which had a tendency to make Milton in his boyhood and first youth discontented with the social institutions of his country, as they then displayed themselves in all their abuses; yet the relics of former greatness still remained in such preservation as to give full force to the imagination: the names, the feudal history, the trophies of former magnificence, were all fresh. Though King James was mean, pedantic, and corrupt, King Charles had a royal spirit, and a benevolent, accomplished mind: he loved literature and the arts, and had subtle, if not grand, abilities. At this time, therefore, Milton's love of monarchical and aristocratical splendour was contending with his puritanic education, and his personal hatred of arbitrary power: his rich imagination and his stern judgment were at variance: his early poems rarely, if ever, touch upon sectarianism: Spenser and Shakspeare, courts, castles, and theatres, did not agree with Calvinistic rigours and formalities. Milton's enthusiasm was, as Warton observes, the enthusiasm of the poet, not of the puritan.

At this time he had more of description and less of abstract thought: that sublime elevation of axiomatic wisdom was not yet reached; but from his earliest years

he appears to have been conversant and delighted with the tone and expressions of the Hebrew poetry: his grand and inimitable "Hymn on the Nativity" proves this. In that hymn is every poetical perfection, mingled with a sort of prophetic solemnity, which fills us with a religious awe: the nervous harmony and climax of the lines are also admirable. It was written in 1629, when he was in his twenty-first year, probably as a college exercise. Mark this stanza:—

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstain'd with human blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

Or these two stanzas:—

The oracles are dumb;
No voice, or hideous hum,
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving;
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting genius is with sighing sent:
With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
The nymphs in twilight-shade of tangled thickets mourn.

Dr. Joseph Warton observes here: "attention is irresistibly awakened and engaged by the air of solemnity and enthusiasm that reigns in this stanza and some that follow. Such is the power of true poetry, that one is almost inclined to believe the superstition real."

I cannot doubt that this hymn was the congenial prelude of that holy and inspired imagination which produced the "Paradise Lost," nearly forty years afterwards.

I am not aware that our young bard had any prototype in this sort of ode: the form, the matter, the imagery, the language, the rhythm, are all new. Milton seems himself in the state of wonder and awe of the shepherds, and of all those whom he describes as affected by this miracle. The trembling, the fervour, the blaze is true inspiration. In this state, the poet, visited by heavenly appearances, must have forgot all worldly fear, and written at this early age solely after his own ideas. The manner in which he describes the dim superstitions of the false oracles is quite magical.

I mention these things here as illustrative of Milton's life. We must consider him now, when he had scarcely reached manhood, as already a perfect poet: he had stamped his power; and was entitled to take his own course accordingly in future life. Good words and pleasing thoughts may easily be worked into harmonious verse; but this is not poetry. I know nothing in which the genuine spell of poetry more breaks out than in the hymn I have here been praising. To show this, I must cite one more stanza:—

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue:
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king
In dismal dance about the furnace blue:
The brutal gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

"These dreadful circumstances," says Warton, "are here endued with life and action; they are put in motion before our eyes, and made subservient to a new purpose of the poet by the superinduction of a poetical fiction, to which they give

occasion. Milton, like a true poet, in describing the Syrian superstition, selects such as were most susceptible of poetical enlargement; and which, from the wildness of their ceremonies, were most interesting to the fancy."

There are magical words of the same character in almost every stanza. There is not a finer line in the whole range of descriptive poetry than this:—

> In dismal dance about the furnace blue.

Yet this ode Johnson passes over in silence. Milton was already in a state of mental fervour, in which all the materials of poetry were spiritualized into a pure golden flame ascending in glory to the skies.

Read also the two following lines, where the poet speaks of the flight of Osiris:—

> In vain with timbrell'd anthems dark
> The sable-stoléd sorcerers bear his worshipp'd ark.

We cannot reason upon the effect of such combinations of words,—the charm is indefinable. Into what a temperament of aërial power must the author have been worked! Well might this sublime priest of the Muses then exclaim,

> Nec duri libet usque minas preferre magistri,
> Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo.

No notice has been handed down how this extraordinary performance was received: it seems yet to have produced no fame to him. When he retired to his father's house at Horton next year, he retired as one who had yet done nothing. His Latin poems want the solemnity, the sublimity, the enthusiasm, the wildness, the imaginativeness, of these English, in which the spirit of Dante and Spenser already began to show itself, moulded up with a character of his own. But Ovid was a poet of a more whimsical and undignified kind, of whom it was strange that he should have been fond, but whom his Latin verses almost everywhere show to have been a great favourite with him.

When we see to what holy subjects and holy imagery Milton's mind was already turned, there is reason for some surprise that he should still have had it in contemplation to produce an epic poem on the inferior and comparatively puerile theme of King Arthur, which no imaginative invention could have invested with the same dignity; when even chivalry had not yet arrived at its historic grandeur, and when everything must have had a fabulousness which shocked probability. This is the more extraordinary, because Milton, though intimately conversant with the old romances, was still more familiar with the spirit, the language, the sublimity of the Sacred Story. It is clear that he was not frightened by the difficulty of duly treating this awful subject, from the manner in which he touched upon it in his majestic hymn, where he showed himself a master of all its mysterious tones. Had he at this time taken subjects from the Bible for a series of odes and hymns, he might even have excelled himself.

He has been supposed not to have had a lyrical ear: nothing can be a greater mistake. The arrangement of his stanza, and the climax of his rhymes in this hymn, are perfect. To my perception there is no other lyrical stanza in our language so varied, so musical, and so grand. The Alexandrian close is like the swelling of the wind when the blast rises to its height.

The poet, perhaps, already grasped at too immense a circuit of human learning: he might be at this early age darkening his mind with the factitious subtleties of politics and theology, which might overlay the sublime and inimitable fire of the Muse. It seems as if he pursued the most abstruse, dry, and puzzling tracks of study. It is indeed to be remarked, that in most of his poems there is an occasional over-fondness for allusion to these blind parts of learning. Life is not long enough for everything; nor can the most ardent flame of the intellect entirely overcome an excessive superincumbence of dead matter.

Though Milton's Latin poetry has been remarked not generally to partake of the character of his English, it has some exceptions. Warton observes of his poem "In Quintum Novembris,"—a college exercise,—that "it contains a council, conspiracy, and expedition of Satan, which may be considered as an early and promising prolusion of the bard's genius to the 'Paradise Lost.'"

In this poem the cave of Phonos (Murther) and Prodotes (Treason), with its inhabitants, are finely imagined, and in the style of Spenser.

"There is," says Warton, "great poetry and strength of imagination in supposing that Murther and Treason often fly as alarmed from the inmost recesses of their own horrid cavern, looking back, and thinking themselves pursued."

In his seventeenth year Milton wrote a poem ("In Obitum Præsulis Eliensis") on Dr. Nicholas Felton, bishop of Ely, who died 5th October, 1626. In the midst of his lamentations he supposes himself carried to heaven. Cowper shall give the general reader a taste of it; for as Warton, candid in his very admiration, observes, "this sort of imagery, so much admired in Milton, appears to me to be much more practicable than many readers seem to suppose."

I bade adieu to bolts and bars,
And soar'd with angels to the stars,
Like him of old, to whom 'twas given
To mount on fiery wheels to heaven.
Bootes' waggon, slow with cold,
Appall'd me not; nor to behold
The sword that vast Orion draws,
Or e'en the Scorpion's horrid claws, &c. &c.

The same elegant and classical commentator remarks, that "the poet's natural disposition, so conspicuous in the 'Paradise Lost,' and even in his prose works, for describing divine objects, such as the bliss of the saints, the splendour of heaven, and the music of the angels, is perpetually breaking forth in some of the earliest of his juvenile poems, and here more particularly in displaying the glories of heaven, which he locally represents, and clothes with the brightest material decorations: his fancy, to say nothing of the Apocalypse, was aided and enriched with descriptions in romances."

The next poem, "Naturam non pati senium," a college exercise, is also praised by Warton. He says that it "is replete with fanciful and ingenious allusions. It has also a vigour of expression, a dignity of sentiment, and elevation of thought, rarely found in very young writers."

The poem consists of sixty-nine lines. The whole is beautiful. In answer to those who assert the liability of nature to old age, the poet says,

At Pater Omnipotens, fundatis fortius astris,
Consuluit rerum summæ, certoque peregit
Pondere fatorum lances, atque ordine summo
Singula perpetuum jussit servare tenorem.
Volvitur hinc lapsu mundi rota prima diurno;
Raptat et ambitos sociâ vertigine cælos.
Tardior haud solito Saturnus, et acer ut olim
Fulmineum rutilat cristatâ casside Mavors.
Floridus æternum Phœbus juvenile coruscat,
Nec fovet effœtas loca per declivia terras
Devexo temone Deus; sed semper amicâ
Luce potens, eadem currit per signa rotarum.
Surgit odoratis pariter formosus ab Indis,
Æthereum pecus albenti qui cogit Olympo,
Mane vocans, et serus agens in pascua cœli:
Temporis et gemino dispertit regna colore.

No! the Almighty Father surer laid
His deep foundations, and providing well
For the event of all, the scales of Fate
Suspended, in just equipoise, and bade
His universal works, from age to age,
One tenour hold, perpetual undisturb'd.
Hence the prime mover wheels itself about
Continual, day by day, and with it bears
In social measure swift the heavens around.
Nor tardier now is Saturn than of old,
Nor radiant less the burning casque of Mars
Phœbus, his vigour unimpair'd, still shows
The effulgence of his youth, nor needs the god
A downward course, that he may warm the vales;
But ever rich in influence, runs his road,
Sign after sign, through all the heavenly zone.

Beautiful, as at first, ascends the star
From odoriferous Ind, whose office is
To gather home betimes the ætherial flock,
To pour them o'er the skies again at eve,
And to discriminate the night and day.—COWPER.

Gray, a century afterwards, wrote tripos verses, at Cambridge, on the subject—"Anne Luna est habitabilis?"

In 1627, anno ætatis 15, Milton wrote his elegy, "Ad Thomam Junium præceptorem suum, apud mercatores Anglicos Hamburghæ agentes, Pastoris munere fungentem." This Thomas Young was Milton's tutor before he went to St. Paul's school. He was a Puritan, of Scotch birth. He returned to England in 1628, and was afterwards preferred by the Parliament to the mastership of Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1644, whence he was ejected for refusing the engagement. He died, and was buried at Stow-market, in Suffolk, where he had been vicar thirty years.*

From Young, Milton says that he received his first introduction to poetry.

Primus ego Aonios, illo præeunte, recessus
Lustrabam, et bifidi sacra vireta jugi;
Pieriosque hausi latices, Clioque favente,
Castalio sparsi læta ter ora mero.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUBJECT OF MILTON'S COLLEGE POETRY CONTINUED.

It does not appear at what exact date Milton wrote his beautiful Latin poem to his father (who lived till 1647), excusing his devotion to the Muses: it was probably before he left Cambridge. Though it assumes that his father did not oppose his pursuits, yet I think we may infer that he had endeavoured to persuade him to occupy himself with some lucrative profession:—

Nec tu perge precor, sacras contemnere Musas, &c.

The poet ends in this noble manner:—

Et vos, o nostri, juvenilia carmina, lusus,
Si modo perpetuos sperare audebitis annos,
Et domini superesse rogo, lucemque tueri,
Nec spisso rapient oblivia nigra sub Orco;
Forsitan has laudes, decantatumque parentis
Nomen, ad exemplum, sero servabitis ævo.

This is an aspiration which Warton praises with congenial enthusiasm, and which was duly fulfilled to its utmost extent.

This poem may be taken as perfectly biographical, as well as poetical: I think it proper, therefore, to give the whole poem, as translated by Cowper.

TO HIS FATHER.

(TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM COWPER.)

O, that Pieria's spring would through my breast
Pour its inspiring influence, and rush
No rill, but rather an o'erflowing flood!
That, for my venerable father's sake,
All meaner themes renounced, my Muse on wings
Of duty borne, might reach a loftier strain.
For thee, my Father! howsoe'er it please,
She frames this slender work; nor know I aught
That may thy gifts more suitably requite;
Though to requite them suitably would ask
Returns much nobler, and surpassing far
The meagre stores of verbal gratitude;
But such as I possess, I send thee all:
This page presents thee in their full amount

* See Mitford's Poetical Dedication to his edition of Parnell.

With thy son's treasures, and the sum is nought;
Nought save the riches that from airy dream,
In secret grottoes and in laurel bowers,
I have by golden Clio's gift acquired.

Verse is a work divine: despise not thou
Verse, therefore, which evinces (nothing more)
Man's heavenly source, and which, retaining still
Some scintillations of Promethean fire,
Bespeaks him animated from above.
The gods love verse: the infernal powers themselves
Confess the influence of verse, which stirs
The lowest deep, and binds in triple chains
Of adamant both Pluto and the shades.
In verse the Delphic priestess, and the pale
Tremulous sibyl, make the future known:
And he who sacrifices, on the shrine
Hangs verse, both when he smites the threatening bull,
And when he spreads his reeking entrails wide
To scrutinise the fates enveloped there.
We, too, ourselves, what time we seek again
Our native skies (and one eternal now
Shall be the only measure of our being),
Crown'd all with gold, and chanting to the lyre
Harmonious verse, shall range the courts above,
And make the starry firmament resound:
And even now the fiery spirit pure,
That wheels yon circling orbs, directs, himself,
Their mazy dance with melody of verse
Unutterable, immortal; hearing which,
Huge Ophiucus holds his hiss suppressed,
Orion, soften'd, drops his ardent blade;
And Atlas stands unconscious of his load.
Verse graced of old the feasts of kings, ere yet
Luxurious dainties, destined to the gulf
Immense of gluttony, were known, and ere
Lyæus deluged yet the temperate board.
Then sat the bard a customary guest,
To share the banquet; and his length of locks
With beechen honours bound, proposed in verse
The character of heroes, and their deeds
To imitation: sang of chaos old;
Of nature's birth; of gods that crept in search
Of acorns fallen, and of the thunder-bolt
Not yet produced from Etna's fiery cave:
And what avails, at last, tune without voice,
Devoid of matter? Such may suit perhaps
The rural dance, but such was ne'er the song
Of Orpheus, whom the stream stood still to hear,
And the oaks follow'd. Not by chords alone
Well touch'd, but by resistless accents more
To sympathetic tears the ghosts themselves
He moved: these praises to his verse he owes.

Nor thou persist, I pray thee, still to slight
The sacred Nine, and to imagine vain
And useless powers, by whom inspired, thyself
Art skilful to associate verse with airs
Harmonious, and to give the human voice
A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.
Now say, what wonder is it, if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if so conjoin'd
In close affinity, we sympathize
In social arts, and kindred studies sweet?
Such distribution of himself to us
Was Phœbus' choice; thou hast thy gift, and I
Mine also; and between us we receive,
Father and son, the whole inspiring god.

No! howsoe'er the semblance thou assume
Of hate, thou hatest not the gentle Muse,
My father! for thou never bad'st me tread
The beaten path and broad, that leads right on
To opulence, nor didst condemn thy son
To the insipid clamours of the bar,
To laws voluminous and ill-observed;
But, wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, led'st me far away
From city din to deep retreats, to banks
And streams Aonian, and, with free consent,
Didst place me happy at Apollo's side.
I speak not now, on more important themes
Intent, of common benefits, and such
As nature bids, but of thy larger gifts,
My Father! who, when I had open'd once
The stores of Roman rhetoric, and learn'd
The full-toned language of the eloquent Greeks,
Whose lofty music graced the lips of Jove,
Thyself didst counsel me to add the flowers
That Gallia boasts,—these too with which the smooth
Italian his degenerate speech adorns,
That witnesses his mixture with the Goth;
And Palestine's prophetic songs divine.
To sum the whole, whate'er the heaven contains,
The earth beneath it, and the air between,
The rivers and the restless deep, may all
Prove intellectual gain to me, my wish
Concurring with thy will: science herself,
All cloud removed, inclines her beauteous head,
And offers me the lip, if dull of heart
I shrink not, and decline her gracious boon.

Go, now, and gather dross, ye sordid minds
That covet it: what could my Father more?
What more could Jove himself, unless he gave
His own abode—the heaven in which he reigns?
More eligible gifts than these were not
Apollo's to his son, had they been safe
As they were insecure, who made the boy
The world's vice-luminary, bade him rule
The radiant chariot of the day, and bind
To his young brows his own all-dazzling wreath.
I, therefore, although last and least, my place
Among the learned in the laurel grove
Will hold, and where the conqueror's ivy twines,
Henceforth exempt from the unletter'd throng
Profane, nor even to be seen by such.
Away, then, sleepless Care! Complaint, away!
And Envy, with thy jealous leer malign!
Nor let the monster Calumny shoot forth
Her venom'd tongue at me. Detested foes!
Ye all are impotent against my peace,
For I am privileged, and bear my breast
Safe, and too high for your viperean wound.
But thou, my Father! since to render thanks
Equivalent, and to requite by deeds
Thy liberality, exceeds my power,
Suffice it, that I thus record thy gifts,
And bear them treasured in a grateful mind.
Ye, too, the favourite pastime of my youth,
My voluntary numbers! if ye dare
To hope longevity, and to survive
Your master's funeral, not soon absorb'd
In the oblivious Lethæan gulf,
Shall to futurity perhaps convey
This theme, and by these praises of my sire
Improve the fathers of a distant age.

In 1627, Milton wrote his first Latin elegy, addressed to Charles Deodate,* in answer to a letter from Cheshire.

Milton's Latin epistles are written in the style of Ovid, but the matter and language not servilely borrowed from him. It seems to me extraordinary that Milton should have taken Ovid for his model. I agree with Warton that it would have been more probable that he would have taken Lucretius and Virgil, as more congenial to him. His poems "Ad Patrem," and "Mansus," I consider much superior, and in a different manner. I cannot agree that "his inherent powers of fancy and invention display themselves" much in the "Elegies." I suspect that the greater part of them might have been by any classical scholar of lively talents, rich in learning, and practised in conversation. Not so "Ad Patrem" or "Mansus;" or some of the college exercises. But it is no more than justice to quote Warton's more favourable judgment on the sixth elegy, also addressed to Deodate. He says, "the transitions and corrections of this elegy are conducted with the skill and address of a master, and form a train of allusions and digressions, productive of fine sentiment and poetry. From a trifling and unimportant circumstance the reader is gradually led to great and lofty imagery."

Of all the elegies, that which pleases me most, and which I consider far the most poetical, and at the same time the most original in its imagery, is the fifth elegy, "In Adventum Veris," ætatis 20, 1629.

But even here the images have not the raciness and wildness of the descriptions in his English poems. Warton speaks of it as excellent in all the requisites of poetry.

Here Milton says that his poetical genius returns in the spring: in later life, he has said that the autumn was the season of his composition.

The last elegy is, perhaps, the best, next to that upon the Spring. Milton was apt to encumber his poetry with too many learned allusions, which unfitted them for the general readers, who might have taste and sympathy without much technical erudition.

At this period, Milton's mind, though his English poems prove that at times it was grave and deep, yet occasionally showed all the playfulness of his youthful age. I am not sure that I like his Ovidian graces. I prefer the solemn tones of his grander imagery; his picturesque descriptions of the scenery of nature: his voices among the lonely mountains; his evening contemplations, and his studious melancholy by the night-lamp. I prefer his allusions to the fables of Gothic romance rather than to the pantheon of the classics, which does not carry with it any part of our belief. Our imaginations can easily enter into the superstitions of the dark ages, which have far more of dignity and sublimity.

Perhaps Milton was at this date more proud of his scholarship than of his own original genius, as Petrarch to the last preferred his own Latin poems to his Italian, and placed on them his hopes of fame. But in a language which is not our own we can never equally express our unborrowed thoughts. In bringing our phraseology to the test; we are driven to the train of mind of others. It is only when the language rises up with the mental conception that it is racy and vigorous. Hence, in my opinion, there is a radical defect in all modern Latin poetry—though it may still have great merit of a secondary sort. I deny that Milton shows in these Latin compositions, unless perhaps on some rare occasion, any thing of the peculiarity of his native genius

* Charles Deodate, the son of Theodore, was born in 1574, at Geneva, where the family still flourishes. See Galiffe's "Généalogies des Familles Genevoises." Theodore came to England, and married a lady of good birth and fortune. In 1609 he appears to have been physician to Henry, Prince of Wales, and the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards Queen of Bohemia. He was brother of John Deodate, a learned Puritan divine, whose theological works, printed at Geneva, are well known. The family came from Lucca on account of their religion.

The following notice as to the family I am favoured with by one of its members, a learned librarian in the Public Library of Geneva. It is extracted from a letter written by Theodore, the father of Charles Deodate, and dated London, 20th March, 1675.

"Nous avons tenu le premier rang entre les familles nobles et patriciennes de tous tems à Lucques, et en sommes encore en possession; le père de mon grand-père logea en son palais l'empereur Charles Quint: il étoit alors gonfalonier; auquel tems mon grand-père nacquit, et l'empereur fût son parrain, et le nomma Charles, et lui donna l'enseigne des diamans, qu'il portait en son col, à son départ. Nous avons eu des généraux d'armées Le général Diodati conserva Brissac à l'empereur contre l'armée des princes d'Allemagne; et fut tué d'une volée de canon dans Munich en Bavière. A cette heure nous avons Don Jean Diodati, chevalier de Malthe, grand-prieur de Venise, cousin-germain de feu mon père," &c.

In his own tongue there are bursts of that mind which produced "Paradise Lost," even in his verses from the age of thirteen. Sometimes an image, sometimes an epithet displays it. A holy inspiration had already commenced in his mind. The tone of the sacred writings had taken fast possession of his enthusiasm: this perhaps was increased by his study of Dante. In Spenser there is more profusion and more flexibility, but not the same sombre and sublime cast. In Shakspeare also, there is more sweetness and less study; more of the "native woodnote wild;" but not that solemn and divine strain, as if an oracle spoke. There is a sort of prophetic awe in the out-breathings of Milton, like that of the Hebrew poetry: yet there is nothing totally uncompounded with human learning. Perhaps it were better if it had been. It is occasionally encumbered.

Milton conforms every thing to his own grand inventions. Shakspeare enters into the souls of others. Spenser brings them upon the stage in groups, in all the allegorical fabulousness of their outward forms. He is the painter of the times of chivalry, moralised into fictions of his own, which display the different virtues in the adventures of different knights; they form wonderful tales of inexhaustible variety,—giants, and enchanted castles, and imprisoned damsels, rescued by heroic courage and divine interference.

CHAPTER IV.

ON L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO.

Milton left the university of Cambridge in 1632, at the age of twenty-three, and retired to the villa of his father at Horton in Buckinghamshire: here he wrote those juvenile poems, which are the most celebrated. The exact date of the "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso," is not known: it is evident that they were suggested by a poem in Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," and by a few beautiful stanzas of Beaumont and Fletcher. These poems are familiar to all: they are rich in picturesque description of natural imagery, selected and combined with the power of splendid genius, according to the opposite humours of cheerfulness and contemplative melancholy; and are the more attractive, because they paint Milton's individual taste, character, and habits. The style of the scenery is principally adapted to the spot and neighbourhood where he now lived

But if I may venture the opinion, I will own that these are not the compositions in which the peculiarity of the grandeur of Milton's genius displays itself. Beautiful as these Odes are, there are others, besides Milton, who might have written them:—not many indeed. They have not the solemnity,—the dim and unearthly visions,—the awful and gigantic grandeur,—the prophetic enthusiasm,—the terrible roll and bound and swell of the "Hymn on the Nativity." The subject did not call for such merits;—but then, if they are excellent, they are excellent in an inferior walk.

Probably I shall be thought heterodox in this judgment. I much prefer "Il Penseroso" to "L'Allegro," as more solemn, more deep-coloured, and more original in its imagery. Perhaps the general merit of these two pieces lies more in a selection of rural pictures combined with taste, than in particular images,—except in a few passages of the latter poem. The metre wants variety and sonorousness.

The passages I chiefly allude to, are Contemplation—

> Him that yon soars on golden wing,

down to

> --- the far-off curfew sound,
> Over some wide-water'd shore,
> Swinging slow with sullen roar.

Again:

> Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career;

down to the end.

In general, there is more of description than of sentiment, more of the material than of the immaterial, in these two compositions: but there are some parts of them which are very important to the illustration of the poet's character. The poet describes a very early period of the morning, "by selecting and assembling such picturesque objects," says Warton, "as were familiar to an early riser. He is waked by the lark, and goes into the fields; the sun is just emerging, and the clouds

are still hovering over the mountains: the cocks are crowing, and, with their lively notes, scatter the lingering remains of darkness. Human labours and employments are renewed with the dawn of day; the hunter, formerly much earlier at his sport than at present, is beating the covert; and the slumbering morn is roused with the cheerful echo of hounds and horns: the mower is whetting his scythe to begin his work; the milk-maid, whose business is of course at daybreak, comes abroad singing; the shepherd opens his fold, and takes the tale of his sheep, to see if any were lost in the night," &c., line 67.

When he sees towers and battlements bosomed high in tufted trees, the same excellent commentator says, "it is the great mansion-house in Milton's early days, before the old-fashioned architecture had given way to modern arts and improvements. Turrets and battlements were conspicuous marks of the numerous new buildings of King Henry VIII., and of some rather more ancient, many of which yet remained in their original state unchanged and undecayed: nor was that style, in part at least, quite omitted in Inigo Jones's first manner; where only a little is seen, more is left to the imagination. These symptoms of an old palace, especially when thus disposed, have a greater effect than a discovery of larger parts, and even a full display of the whole edifice. The embosomed battlements, and the spreading top of the tall grove, on which they reflect a reciprocal charm, still farther interest the fancy from the novelty of combination; while just enough of the towering structure is shown to make an accompaniment to the tufted expanse of venerable verdure, and to compose a picturesque association. With respect to their rural residence, there was a coyness in our gothic ancestors: modern seats are seldom so deeply ambushed: they disclose all their glories at once; and never excite expectation by concealment, by gradual approaches, and by interrupted appearances."

At line 131, the poet alludes to a stage worthy of his presence:—

Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on;
Or sweetest Shakspeare, fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

Milton had not yet gone such extravagant lengths in puritanism, as to join with his reforming brethren in condemning the stage.

By "trim gardens" ("Il Pens." l. 50), Milton means those gardens of elaborate artifice and extravagance, of which Bacon has given a description; some of which I still remember in existence, in my own boyhood, sixty years ago. There was a sort of magnificence and variety about them, in some respects more interesting than modern barrenness. I often wish them back;—the terraces, the slopes, the wilderness-walks, the mazes, the alleys, the garden-plots, the gravel-walks, the bowers, the summer-houses, the bowling-greens, have been too rudely and indiscriminately swept away.

Where the poet says, line 109,

Or call up him who left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,

he expresses his admiration of Chaucer, "the father of English poetry," says Warton, "who is here distinguished by a story remarkable for the wildness of its invention; and hence Milton seems to make a very pertinent and natural transition to Spenser, whose 'Faërie Queene,' although it externally professes to treat of tournaments and the trophies of knightly valour, of forests drear and terrific enchantments, is yet allegorical, and contains a remote meaning concealed under the veil of a fabulous story and of a typical narrative, which is not immediately perceived. Spenser sings in sage and solemn tunes, with respect to his morality, and the dignity of his stanza. In the mean time, it is to be remembered that there were other great bards, and of the romantic class, who sang in such tunes, and who mean 'more than meets the ear.' Both Tasso and Ariosto pretend to an allegorical and mysterious meaning; and Tasso's enchanted forest, the most conspicuous fiction of the kind, might have been here intended. Berni allows that his incantations, giants, magic gardens, monsters, and other romantic imageries, may amuse the ignorant, but that the intelligent have more penetration. Orl. Inam. l. I. c. xxv.

Ma voi ch' avete gl' intelletti sani,
Mirate la dottrina che s' asconde
Sotto queste coperte alte e profonde.

"One is surprised," continues Warton, "that Milton should have delighted in romances: the images of feudal and royal life which those books afford, agreed not at all with his system. A passage should here be cited from our author's 'Apology for Smectymnuus:'—'I may tell you whither my young feet wandered: I betook me among those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood,' &c. The extraordinary and most imaginative, but inconsistent poet, exclaims, line 155,

> But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloisters pale, &c.

Being educated at St. Paul's school, contiguous to the church, he thus became impressed with an early reverence for the solemnities of the ancient ecclesiastical architecture,—its vaults, shrines, aisles, pillars, and painted glass, rendered yet more awful by the accompaniment of the choral service."

It is unnecessary to copy the opinion which Johnson gives of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," because it is in every one's hands. Johnson yet allows that "they are two noble efforts of imagination."—They would be noble for a common poet; but not comparatively for Milton: I cannot allow them that high invention which belongs to the bard of "Paradise Lost." Warton criticises Johnson's comment with a just severity:—"Never," says he, "were fine imagery and fine imagination so marred, mutilated, and impoverished by a cold, unfeeling, and imperfect representation."—"No part of 'L'Allegro,'" says Johnson, "is made to arise from the pleasures of the bottle." What sad vulgarity! Who could suspect that Milton would write a Bacchanalian song?

It seems to me that these two poems are much more valuable for their development of Milton's studies and amusements, than for their poetry, by proving his love of nature,—of books,—of solitude,—of contemplation,—of all that is beautiful, and all that is romantic,—than for those bold figures, and that glorious fiction, which were his power and his chief delight. Observation and an accurate copy of the external appearances of nature do not make the highest poetry: to copy always restrains the imagination.

When we make things after our own fashion, we have the ascendancy over them: it is better to deal with the invisible world than with the visible: but we ought to associate them together: mere description is always imperfect: all the grandeur of natural scenery will not avail, unless by its tendency to operate on the human mind. This is the spell of Gray's poetry: this makes the charm of Collins' "Ode to Evening:" this is the magic of the poetical part of Cowley's "Essays:" all those parts of Shakspeare's dramas which break into pure poetry, are of this cast. It is a charm which, to my apprehension, was scarce ever reached by Dryden or Pope: Byron repeatedly reached it; sometimes he was extravagant: Wordsworth absolutely deals in it. All impression on the mind is nothing, unless the mind throws back its own colours upon it.

All the labour and all the art in the world will do nothing for poetry: they may draw copiously and freely from a cistern which they have previously filled with borrowed water: but the water will be stale, vapid, and good for nothing.

I have said the more on these two lyrics of Milton, because they are so much more universal favourites than some of his diviner compositions. The greater part of the images are within every one's observance; but this is not, I think, a high merit: the poet's eye should "give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." Here the images, for the most part, are such as actually exist bodily: the touches upon their most picturesque features are indeed exquisite; and here and there are passages of aërial music unknown to common ears: but then the want of dignity, of the "long-resounding pace" in the versification, lessens the magic. The whole is written lightly, and upon the surface: the poet skims away, just touches with his wings, and goes on: he does not here rise in slow and majestic dignity to the sun; hovering sometimes on his mighty pinions, and seeming to hang over the earth, as if his eye was penetrating into its depths; and then, as if with an angel's power, again darting into the upper regions of the sky.

I can scarcely suppose that these two pieces cost Milton any labour, or time, or strong exercise of mind: each of them might easily have been produced by him in a few hours: but there is an abstraction of mind, a visionary enthusiasm, which requires a very different sort of nursing: in that state Milton must have been in his

sublimer compositions. Here he deals with nothing difficult, nor enters into the mysteries of the soul.

If I say that there is not much sentiment in these descriptions I shall probably be answered, that the images are selected by sentiment, and so arranged as to produce a particular tone of sentiment. If it be so, the sentiment is not brought out; and the poet ought not to trust to others to bring out that which he ought to express himself. It will not be pretended that there is any moral pathos here; and moral pathos is assuredly one of the finest spells of poetry. Pathos cannot be produced by a writer who has not a visionary presence of the objects which produce it; but it were better to give more of the pathos, and less of the objects.

This faculty, indeed, was not Milton's chief excellence: now and then he is pathetic in "Paradise Lost," but he has none of Shakspeare's human pathos: he was too stern and heroic for tears.

It is rarely that I get into a different track of criticism from Warton; but Warton was perhaps too exclusively fond of imagery and descriptions, and therefore has estimated the poems, of which I am now speaking, higher than I do. Warton also wanted pathos, but he was not without a gentle and kindly sentiment.

These descriptive poems had long fallen into oblivion, when, about 1740, they were revived by the Wartons, who formed a school upon them. Like all schools when they once took up the thing, they carried it too far: but Collins, in his "Ode to Evening," stopped precisely at the true point: Gray caught some of the infusion, and I suspect that in two or three images or epithets he was indebted to Collins; but did not owe his tone to the Warton school, being rather their senior, and drinking from the original fountains, not only of Milton, but still more of the Italians, as well as of the classics. Altogether, the cast and combination of the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" is his own, though he may have borrowed particular ingredients. His is a perfect model, *sui generis*. Joseph Warton's "Ode to Fancy" is an attempted echo of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso;" indeed, almost a cento.

CHAPTER V.

ON LYCIDAS, AND EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS.

Edward King, fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, the friend of Milton, passing over to Ireland to visit his friends, the ship struck on a rock on the English coast, August 10th, 1637, when all on board perished. He was son of Sir John King, knight, secretary for Ireland under Queen Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. At Cambridge, Edward King was distinguished for his piety and proficiency in polite letters. "Lycidas," which laments his death, first appeared in the Cambridge collection of verses on that occasion, 1638.

Dr. Johnson's censure on this poem is gross and tasteless: it is disgraceful only to the critic. He has treated with insolent rudeness one tenfold greater than himself: he has set the example; and why should *he* be spared? I will endeavour to discuss this question with the utmost impartiality, and confer neither praise nor blame from unfounded prejudice.

This poem is so far from deserving the character applied to it by Johnson, that "the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing,"—that, the language is throughout imaginative and picturesque, and the rhythm harmonious and enchanting: there is no poem in which the epithets are more beautiful, more appropriate, and more fresh: they are like the diction of no predecessor, but of some of the occasional passages of rural description by Shakspeare, in his happiest modes: the outburst at the commencement is eminently striking, and rich with poetry: the images that present themselves, and the transitions, are always natural, and sometimes sublime: they have this difference from those of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," that they are more spiritual; that is, they are more mingled up with intellect: they are not purely material. As to the poem being pastoral, Johnson might much more object to the Psalms; as in Addison's beautiful version—

The Lord my pasture shall prepare, &c.

where the Deity himself is represented in the character of a shepherd.

But it will be asked what invention there is in this poem? There is invention in the epithets, in the combinations, in the descriptions, in the apostrophes, in the visionary parts of the poem, in the sorrows, the predictions, and the consolations: in all those associations, which none but a rich and poetical mind produces.

Johnson had so accustomed himself to cultivate dry reason only, that he thought all array of imagery idle and useless. If he had any feeling, it was only when he argued himself into it; it did not come from the senses: he loved abstraction; but it was not the abstraction of shadows, nor the "bodying forth" of "airy nothings." Milton's mind was in a blaze, surrounded by a whole range of invisible worlds and their aërial inhabitants: his genius gave to matter an ideal light and ideal properties: he connected the dignity of human-existence with the beauty and the grandeur of the scenery of nature.

The epithets which true poets give to imagery confer upon it its spell: "Lycidas" is full of these epithets from beginning to end: they are always fresh and exquisitely vivid, but never extravagant or over-ornamental.

The versification is as regular as is consistent with vigour and variety: the five-feet lines are far preferable to the shorter lines of the two poems before discussed.

"Lycidas" is full of learned allusions, perhaps too full,—which was Milton's fault.

Dr. Joseph Warton has truly said, that the admiration or dislike of this poem is an infallible test whether a reader has or has not a poetical taste: he who is not enraptured with it can have no genuine idea of poetry.

If we are asked what puts all within the range of mind before us in such brilliant or such affecting colours, we can only say that it is indefinable, but that we cannot doubt its effects. All secondary poets attempt this by a false gloss: they are full of ornament; but the ornament is a glare, or a set of artificial flowers: there is no fragrance,—no vivifying spirit. In a true poet, like Milton, all springs up unsought from the fountain of the soul or the heart: it is an enthusiasm; but an enthusiasm not unapproved by the sober judgment and the conscience. Nothing is good, which there is not some susceptibility within us ready instantly to recognise: nothing can be forced upon us by artful effort: no factitious gilding will avail. The poet's difficulty is to find expressions for what he really feels.

Now and then there may be a momentary blaze in inferior authors; but, in bards like Milton, all is one texture of light.

Just before Milton's return from Italy in 1639, his friend Charles Deodate died, and the news met him on his arrival: he then wrote a Latin elegy on him, entitled "Epitaphium Damonis," which has some similitude to "Lycidas." Warton says, that there are in it some new and natural country images, and the common topics are often recommended by a novelty of elegant expression: it contains some passages which wander far beyond the bounds of bucolic song, and are in his own original style of the more sublime poetry. Milton cannot be a shepherd long: his own native powers break forth, and cannot bear the assumed disguise.

At line 155 of this elegy, he hints his design of writing an epic poem on some part of the ancient British story. So, in his poem entitled "Mansus," he says,

Si quando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem.

These are the ancient kings of Britain: this was the subject for an epic poem that first occupied his mind. King Arthur, at his death, was supposed to be carried into the subterraneous land of fairy or of spirits, where he still reigned as a king; and whence he was to return into Britain, to renew the round table, conquer all his enemies, and re-establish his throne: he was therefore "etiam movens bella sub terris," still meditating wars under the earth. The impulse of Milton's attachment to this subject was not entirely suppressed: it produced his "History of Britain." By the expression, "revocabo in carmina," the poet means, that these ancient kings, which were once the themes of the British bards, should now again be celebrated in verse. Milton, in his "Church Government," written in 1641, says that, after the example of Tasso, "it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in one of our own ancient stories!" It is possible that the advice of Manso, the friend of Tasso, might determine the poet to a design of this kind.

CHAPTER VI.

ON COMUS.

In 1634, Milton wrote his immortal "Mask of Comus," for John Egerton, first Earl of Bridgewater, then Lord President of Wales, to be presented at Ludlow Castle, which was his Lordship's residence.

The poet's father held his house under the Earls of Bridgewater, at Horton, near Harefield, and not far from Ashridge: thus, perhaps, was the poet introduced to that noble family. he certainly had not yet become a decided puritan and republican. The Countess of Derby (Alice Spencer), mother-in-law of the Earl of Bridgewater, and also widow of Lord Chancellor Egerton, was a generous patroness of poets, and, among the rest, of her relation, the author of the "Faëry Queene." Such a patroness would be, above all others, grateful to Milton.

"Comus" was acted by the Earl's children, the Lord Brackley, Mr. Thomas Egerton, and the Lady Alice Egerton.

The Egertons were among the most powerful of the nobility, and lived in the most state. By a marriage with a co-heiress of the great feudal family of Stanley, who were co-heirs to the royal races of Tudor and Plantagenet, they held a sort of demi-regal respect. Their domains were large, and their character for hospitality and accomplishments stood high. This historical house have, a century afterwards, rendered themselves again immortal by designing and patronising national works of another class.*

Masks had been common in the time of Ben Jonson. I leave to antiquaries to trace the origin of the subject and design of "Comus." The merit lies not in the hint, but in the superstructure. The story is said to have been occasioned by a domestic incident of the Egerton family.

When we open this poem, we seem to enter on the beings and language of another world. Every word is poetry.

The first of the dramatis personæ is the Spirit, whose speech runs to ninety-two lines. It is of the deepest interest to the piece, and opens to us the sovereignty of Neptune—the quartering of our island to his blue-haired deities—the parentage of Comus—his dangerous arts, and the Spirit's own protecting intervention.

Next comes Comus attended by his monstrous rout, whom he thus addresses:—

> The star that bids the shepherd fold
> Now the top of heaven doth hold, &c.

The noise of their revelry calls the attention of the Lady, who now enters:—

> This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
> My best guide now.

"By laying the scene of this Mask," Warton observes, "in a wild forest, Milton secured to himself a perpetual fund of picturesque description, which, resulting from situation, was always at hand. He was not obliged to go out of his way for this striking embellishment: it was suggested of necessity by present circumstances. The same happy choice of scene supplied Sophocles in 'Philoctetes,' Shakspeare in 'As You Like It,' and Fletcher in the 'Faithful Shepherdess,' with frequent and even unavoidable opportunities of rural delineation; and that of the most romantic kind. But Milton has had additional advantages: his forest is not only the residence of a magician, but is exhibited under the gloom of midnight. Fletcher, however, to whom Milton is confessedly indebted, avails himself of the latter circumstance."

The lady exclaims,

> A thousand phantasies
> Begin to throng into my memory,
> Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
> And aëry tongues, that syllable men's names
> On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.

* The canal navigation of the last Duke of Bridgewater, who died in 1803, is celebrated all over the world. The last two Earls, who succeeded him, were indeed less eminent, and dimmed—the former by his mediocrity, the latter by his eccentricities—some of the lustre of the name. The last died in 1829. Such are the chances and changes of time.

Warton says, "I remember these superstitions, which are here finely applied, in the ancient voyages of Marco Paolo the Venetian, speaking of the vast and perilous desert of Lop in Asia, 'Cernuntur et audiuntur, in eo interdiu, et *sæpius noctu*, dæmonum variæ illusiones. Unde viatoribus summe cavendum est, ne multum ab invicem seipsos dissocient, aut aliquis a tergo sese diutius impediat. Alioquin, quamprimum propter montes et calles quispiam comitum suorum aspectum perdiderit, non facile ad eos perveniet: nam audiuntur ibi *voces* dæmonum, qui solitarie incedentes *propriis* appellant *nominibus*, voces *fingentes* illorum quos comitari se putant, ut a recto itinere abductos in perniciem deducant.'—De Regionib. Oriental. l. I. c. 44. But there is a mixture from Fletcher's 'Faithful Shepherdess,' A. I. S. i. p. 108. The shepherdess mentions, among other nocturnal terrors in a wood, 'Or voices calling me in dead of night.' These fancies from Marco Paolo are adopted in Heylin's 'Cosmographie,' I am not sure if in any of the three editions printed before 'Comus' appeared."* The song on Echo is more exquisite than any thing of its kind in our language.

"'Comus,'" says Warton, "is universally allowed to have taken some of its tints from the 'Tempest.'"

The following is a beautiful passage:

'Tis most true
That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house.

On which Warton has the following somewhat singular note:—"Not many years after this was written, Milton's friends showed that the safety of a senate-house was not inviolable: but when the people turn legislators, what place is safe from the tumults of innovation, and the insults of disobedience!" True—if uncontrolled by king and lords, as they have lately attempted to be.

The poet, speaking of chastity, says,

Yea, there, where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblench'd majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.

Dr. Joseph Warton remarks, in his "Essay on Pope," that poet's imitation of this and other passages of Milton's juvenile poems. "This is the first instance," adds Thomas Warton, "of any degree even of the slightest attention being paid to Milton's smaller poems by a writer of note since their first publication. Milton was never mentioned or acknowledged as an English poet till after the appearance of 'Paradise Lost;' and long after that time these pieces were totally forgotten and overlooked. It is strange that Pope, by no means of a congenial spirit, should be the first who copied 'Comus' or 'Il Penseroso.' But Pope was a gleaner of the old English poets; and he was here pilfering from obsolete English poetry, without the least fear or danger of being detected.

At l. 780 the lady says,

To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity,
Fain would I something say, yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear nor soul to apprehend
The sublime notion, and high mystery,
That must be utter'd to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.

Upon this passage, also, Warton has the following curious note:—

"By studying the reveries of the Platonic writers, Milton contracted a theory concerning chastity and the purity of love, in the contemplation of which, like other visionaries, he indulged his imagination with ideal refinements, and with pleasing but unmeaning notions of excellence and perfection. Plato's sentimental or meta-

* See lib. iii. p. 201, edit. 1652, fol. Sylvestre, in Du Bartas, has also the tradition in the text, ed. fol. ut supr. p. 274.

physical love, he seems to have applied to the natural love between the sexes. The very philosophical dialogue of the Angel and Adam, in the eighth book of 'Paradise Lost,' altogether proceeds on this doctrine. In the 'Smectymnuus' he declares his initiation into the mysteries of this immaterial love. 'Thus from the laureate fraternity of poets, riper years, and the ceaseless round of study and reading, led me to the shady spaces of philosophy; but chiefly to the divine volume of Plato, and his equal Xenophon; where, if I should tell ye what I learned of chastity and love, I mean that which is truly so,' &c. But in the dialogue just mentioned, where Adam asks his celestial guest, 'Whether angels are susceptible of love, whether they express their passion by looks only, or by a mixture of irradiation, by virtual or immediate contact?' our author seems to have overleaped the Platonic pale, and to have lost his way among the solemn conceits of Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas. It is no wonder that the angel blushed, as well as smiled, at some of these questions."

The incomparable poem of "Comus" thus ends :—

> Mortals, that would follow me,
> Love Virtue; she alone is free;
> She can teach ye how to climb
> Higher than the sphery chime;
> Or if Virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her.

Thyer says, that "the moral of this poem is very finely summed up in the six concluding lines. The thought contained in the last two might probably be suggested to our author by a passage in the 'Table of Cebes,' where Patience and Perseverance are represented stooping and stretching out their hands to help up those who are endeavouring to climb the craggy hill of Virtue, and yet are too feeble to ascend themselves."

Mr. Francis Egerton (afterwards the last Earl of Bridgewater) has observed upon this, that "had this ingenious critic duly reflected on the lofty mind of Milton,

> Smit with the love of sacred song,

and so often and so sublimely employed on topics of religion, he might readily have found a subject, to which the poet obviously and divinely alludes in these concluding lines, without fetching the thought from the 'Table of Cebes.' In the preceding attack I am convinced Mr. Thyer had no ill intention; but by overlooking so clear and pointed an allusion to a subject calculated to kindle that lively glow in the bosom of every Christian, which the poet intended to excite, and by referring it to an image in a profane author, he may, besides stifling the sublime effect so happily producted, afford a handle to some in these 'evil days,' who are willing to make the religion of Socrates and Cebes (or that of Nature) supersede the religion of Christ. The moral of this poem is, indeed, very finely summed up in the six concluding lines, in which, to wind up one of the most elegant productions of his genius,

> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

threw up his last glance to Heaven, in rapt contemplation of that stupendous mystery, whereby He, the lofty theme of 'Paradise Regained,' stooped from above all height, 'bowed the heavens, and came down on earth,' to atone as man for the sins of men, to strengthen feeble Virtue by the influence of his grace, and to teach her to ascend his throne."

Numerous critics, from Toland to Todd, have given the character of this poem; but Thomas Warton's is by far the best: Johnson, with some good passages, has intermixed much captious objection, and not a little vulgarity. He cannot refrain from a sort of coarse sneer, which affects to be humour.

"We must not," says Warton, "read 'Comus' with an eye to the stage, or with the expectation of dramatic propriety. Under this restriction the absurdity of the Spirit speaking to an audience in a solitary forest at midnight, and the want of reciprocation in the dialogue, are overlooked. 'Comus' is a suite of speeches, not interesting by discrimination of character; not conveying a variety of incidents, nor gradually exciting curiosity; but perpetually attracting attention by sublime sentiment, by fanciful imagery of the richest vein, by an exuberance of picturesque description, poetical allusion, and ornamental expression." To this the critic adds many other excellent observations.

A Mask, written for a private theatre, and to be performed by highly-educated actors, is not like a play to be exhibited to a mixed and common audience: long speeches, therefore, of a tone too lofty for vulgar ears, are not here objectionable. Of the texture of the present composition every word is eminently poetical. Passages of similar beauty may be found in Shakspeare, and even in Fletcher,—but not an uniform and unbroken web. It is true that there is little passion in this dramatic poem; but none is pretended to: while it is enchantingly descriptive, it is at the same time philosophically calm. We are carried into a fairy region of good Spirits and bad: and every thing of rural scenery that is delightful, associated with wild and picturesque beliefs of an invisible world in mountains, valleys, forests, and rivers, is introduced to keep up the magic. Were it a mere description of inanimate nature, it would be comparatively dull. Here, too, a beautiful girl, of high rank, richly accomplished in mind, is introduced, to pour out under alarming circumstances a divine eloquence of exalted and affecting sentiment. Virtue and truth, and purity of intellect and heart, break out at every word. To these strains who can deny poetical invention? What definition of poetry can be given, by which this Mask can be excluded from a very high place? Is it not everywhere either brilliant and picturesque or lofty fiction? It is said that the characters have no passion; but how is passion a necessary ingredient of poetry? Poetry must create; but it may create beings of tranquil beauty, and calm exaltation. Cavillers say, that the Brothers ought not to philosophise, while the Sister is left alone in the dangers of a solitary forest: but their faith in a protecting Providence will not allow them to think her in great danger. It may be replied that this is an improbable degree of faith. Is it a poetical improbability? It seems as if such censors think that nothing must be represented which does not occur in every-day life. Poetry is literally, and to all extent, the reverse of this.

Minor bards may give occasional touches of outward poetry by illustrations of imagery and description; but the whole structure and soul of Milton's "Comus" is poetry: not the dress, but the intrinsic spirit, and the essence. The characters of the Attendant Spirit, and of Comus, are exquisite inventions. What is copied from observation, is not always poetry; therefore Dryden and Pope were very often not poets.

There are numerous ideas implanted in our nature, which are not bodily truths, but imaginative truths: even single epithets convey these, as is shown by every part of "Comus," while picturesque words point out the leading features of every rural object. No such words ever appear in Dryden or Pope, unless they are borrowed. Their descriptions are general and vague: they convey fine sounds, but no precise ideas. The true poet cannot avoid seeing: images haunt him; he cannot get rid of them: he does not call up his memory to produce empty words, but he draws from the visionary shapes before him.

While Milton was framing the "Comus," he no doubt lived in the midst of his own creation: he only clothed the tongues of his characters with what it appeared to him in his vision they actually spoke.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ARCADES.

The "Arcades" was a Mask, which was part of an entertainment presented to Alice Spencer, Countess Dowager of Derby, and afterwards widow of Lord Chancellor Egerton, at Harefield in Middlesex, and acted by some noble persons of her family.

This celebrated lady was daughter of Sir John Spencer of Althorp, who was then one of the richest commoners of England. Her first husband, Earl Ferdinando, was a most accomplished nobleman who died in the flower of his age;—it is supposed by poison, because he would not enter into the plots of the Jesuits to claim the crown from Queen Elizabeth, on account of his royal descent; for which see the famous volume, called "Dolman's Conference," written by Parsons the Jesuit, and see also Hallam, and Hargrave.

Norden, in his "Speculum Britanniæ," about 1590, speaking of Harefield, says, "There Sir Edmond Anderson, Knight, Lord-Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, hath a fair house, standing on the edge of the hill; the river Colne passing near the same, through the pleasant meadows and sweet pastures, yielding both delight and profit." "I viewed this house," says Warton, "a few years ago, when it was for the most part remaining in its original state. It has since been pulled down; the porters' lodges on each side of the gateway are converted into a commodious dwelling-house. It is near Uxbridge; and Milton, when he wrote 'Arcades,' was still living with his father at Horton, near Colnebrook, in the same neighbourhood. He mentions the singular felicity he had in vain anticipated in the society of his friend Deodate, on the shady banks of the river Colne :—

> Imus, et argutâ paulum recubamus in umbrâ,
> Aut ad aquas Colni, &c.—Epit. Damon. l. 149.

Amidst the fruitful and delightful scenes of this river the nymphs and shepherds had no reason to regret, as in the third song, the Arcadian 'Ladon's lilied banks.' Unquestionably this Mask was a much longer performance. Milton seems only to have written the poetical part, consisting of these three songs and the recitative soliloquy of the Genius: the rest was probably prose and machinery. In many of Jonson's Masques the poet but rarely appears, amid a cumbersome exhibition of heathen gods and mythology."

The Countess of Derby died 26th January, 1635-6, and was buried at Harefield. (See "Lysons's Environs of London.")

Harrington has an epigram on this lady, B. iii. 47.

IN PRAISE OF THE COUNTESS OF DERBY, MARRIED TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

> This noble Countess lived many years
> With Derby, one of England's greatest peers:
> Fruitful and fair, and of so clear a name,
> That all this region marvell'd at her fame.
> But this brave peer extinct by hasten'd fate,
> She stay'd, ha, too, too long in widow's state;
> And in that state took so sweet state upon her,
> All ears, eyes, tongues, heard, saw, and told her honour, &c.

But Milton is not the only great English poet who has celebrated the Countess Dowager of Derby. She was the sixth daughter, as we have seen, of Sir John Spencer, with whose family Spenser the poet claimed an alliance. In his "Colin Clout's come home again," written about 1595, he mentions her under the appellation of Amaryllis, with her sisters Phyllis or Elizabeth, and Charyllis or Anne; these three of Sir John Spencer's daughters being best known at Court. See l. 536.

> No less praiseworthy are the sisters three,
> The honour of the noble family,
> Of which I meanest boast myself to be,
> And most that unto them I am so nigh.

After a panegyric on the first two, he next comes to Amaryllis, or Alice, our lady, the dowager of Earl Ferdinando, lately deceased :—

> But Amaryllis, whether fortunate,
> Or else unfortunate may I aread,
> That freed is from Cupid's yoke by fate,
> Since which she doth new bands adventure dread,
> Shepherd, whatever thou hast heard to be
> In this or that praised diversely apart,
> In her thou mayest them assembled see,
> And seal'd up in the treasure of her heart.

And in the same poem he thus apostrophises to her late husband, under the name of Amyntas: see l. 434.

> Amyntas quite is gone, and lies full low,
> Having his Amaryllis left to moan.
> Help, O ye shepherds! help ye all in this,—
> Her loss is yours; your loss Amyntas is!
> Amyntas, flower of shepherds' pride forlorn;

He, whilst he lived, was the noblest swain
That ever piped on an oaten quill;
Both did he other, which could pipe, maintain,
And eke could pipe himself with passing skill.

And to the same Lady Alice, when Lady Strange, before her husband Ferdinando's succession to the earldom, Spenser addressed his "Tears of the Muses," published in 1591, in a dedication of the highest regard; where he speaks of "your excellent beauty, your virtuous behaviour, and your noble match with that most honourable lord, the very pattern of right nobility." He then acknowledges the particular bounties which she had conferred upon the poets. Thus the lady who presided at the representation of Milton's "Arcades" was not only the theme but the patroness of Spenser. The peerage-book of this most respectable countess is the poetry of her times.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON MILTON'S FOREIGN TRAVELS.

In 1637, ætat. twenty-nine, Milton, on the death of his mother, obtained his father's leave to visit Italy. I have already mentioned the course of his travels. The accomplished and amiable Sir Henry Wotton, whose admiration and heart had been won by the poet's "Comus," gave him his advice and recommendations. At Florence, Rome, and Naples, he was received with applause and kindness by all the most eminent literati. He, who had been little noticed in his own country, was received with the most distinguished honours abroad, in the country of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso.

How happened this? Yet such is the perversity of human nature!

It is a subject of deep regret that Milton has not left a written account of his travels, with details such as modern visitors of the same and other countries give; or even such short notes as Gray sent in his letters. It is impossible to conceive any other so qualified to receive delight from these visits as Milton. Above all other men, his mind was full of the richest and most profound classical recollections. Not only his fancy held a mirror to all the beautiful and golden scenery, and all the exquisite and grand displays of the arts of painting and sculpture, but he had a creative imagination, beyond all other men, which must have fired into a blaze at them. All with which his mind had been stored from boyhood, drawn from distant sources, must now have seemed to be realised. He saw the very identical relics of classical times embodied before his eyes: he saw clear skies, and beautiful scenes, of which we have no idea in a northern climate. The Alps and the Apennines, the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, and above all the bay of Naples, gave him landscapes and sea-views such as an Englishman, who has never quitted his own country, can have no conception of.

He visited Galileo, which, however, was supposed to have raised some dangerous prejudices against him: but his great friend was the Marquis Manso of Naples, who had been the friend of Tasso, and who was himself a poet. "Ad Mansum" is one of the best of his Latin poems. With what enthusiasm must Milton have entered into Tasso's character, as well as that of Dante, Petrarch, and Ariosto! Dante's genius was, no doubt, the nearest to his own: but in addition to the epic imagination, there is in his personal history something so striking, so melancholy, and so full of deep interest, that it adds twofold to the attraction with which we read his poetry.

Three, at least, of these four mighty poets suffered great misfortunes: but the history of their lives is well known, and this is not the place for treating of them. We have nothing English of the same sort as their respective geniuses, unless, perhaps, Spenser. The sombreness and mystical sublimity of Dante is peculiar to himself: he has been admirably translated by Cary: he lived in a glorious time for poetry, when superstition fostered and coloured all its noblest creations; and when the chilling and false artifices of the cold critic had not yet paralysed exertion;—when all was hope and adventure, both of mind and body.

Had Milton's mind at this epoch been so strongly infected with puritanism as his enemies averred, he could not have enjoyed Italian manners and Italian genius.

There he saw all the pomp and warmth of religion: puritanism had all its acidity and rigidness, and all its freezing bareness. Coming fresh from these things, of which he has expressed his delight, I know not how he could so at once plunge into principles, which would destroy them all to the very root; but such are the inconsistencies of frail humanity! Gray saw all these things with equal sensibility and taste, if not with equal genius; and he remained fixed in the love of them through life.

But it is worthy of remark, that as soon as Milton actively took the side of this cause of destruction, the Muses left him for twenty years. Coming fresh from the living fountains of all imaginative creation, the happy delirium of glorious genius subsided into a cold and harsh stagnation of all that was eloquent and generous. The blight was more violent and effective in proportion as the bloom had been strong.

Milton did not stay long enough at any of the great Italian cities: instead of eighteen months among them all, his stay ought to have been four or five years.

I give in this place Cowper's translation of the Latin epistle to Manso.

TO GIOVANNI BATTISTA MANSO,

MARQUIS OF VILLA.

["Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, is an Italian nobleman of the highest estimation among his countrymen for genius, literature, and military accomplishments. To him Torquato Tasso addressed his 'Dialogues on Friendship;' for he was much the friend of Tasso, who has also celebrated him among the other princes of his country in his poem entitled 'Gerusalemme Conquistata,' book xx.

Fra cavalier magnanimi, e cortesi,
Risplende il Manso.

During the author's stay at Naples, he received at the hands of the Marquis a thousand kind offices and civilities: and, desirous not to appear ungrateful, sent him this poem a short time before his departure from that city."]

These verses also to thy praise the Nine,
O Manso! happy in that theme, design;
For, Gallus and Mæcenas gone, they see
None such besides, or whom they love, as thee;
And, if my verse may give the meed of fame,
Thine too shall prove an everlasting name.
Already such it shines in Tasso's page,
For thou wast Tasso's friend, from age to age;
And next, the Muse consign'd, not unaware
How high the charge, Marino to thy care;
Who, singing to the nymphs Adonis' praise,
Boasts thee the patron of his copious lays.
To thee alone the poet would entrust
His latest vows; to thee alone his dust:
And thou with punctual piety hast paid,
In labour'd brass, thy tribute to his shade.
Nor this contented thee—but, lest the grave
Should aught absorb of theirs, which thou couldst save,
All future ages thou hast deign'd to teach
The life, lot, genius, character of each,
Eloquent as the Carian sage, who true
To his great theme, the life of Homer drew.

I, therefore, though a stranger youth, who come,
Chill'd by rude blasts, that freeze my northern home,
Thee dear to Clio, confident proclaim,
And thine, for Phœbus' sake, a deathless name.
Nor thou, so kind, wilt view with scornful eye
A Muse scarce rear'd beneath a northern sky;
Who fears not, indiscreet as she is young,
To seek in Latium hearers of her song.
We too, where Thames with his unsullied waves
The tresses of the blue-hair'd ocean laves,
Hear oft by night, or, slumbering, seem to hear,
O'er his wide stream, the swan's voice warbling clear;
And we could boast a Tityrus of yore,
Who trod, a welcome guest, yon happy shore.

Yes,—dreary as we own our northern clime,
Ev'n we to Phœbus raise the polish'd rhyme;
We too serve Phœbus: Phœbus has received,
If legends old may claim to be believed,
No sordid gifts from us, the golden ear,
The burnish'd apple, ruddiest of the year,
The fragrant crocus, and, to grace his fane,
Fair damsels chosen from the Druid train;
Druids, our native bards in ancient time,
Who gods and heroes prais'd in hallow'd rhyme!
Hence, often as the maids of Greece surround
Apollo's shrine with hymns of festive sound,
They name the virgins, who arrived of yore
With British offerings on the Delian shore:
Loxo, from giant Corineas sprung;
Upis, on whose bless'd lips the future hung;
And Hecaërge, with the golden hair,
All deck'd with Pictish hues, and all with bosoms bare.

Thou, therefore, happy sage, whatever clime
Shall ring with Tasso's praise in after-time,
Or with Marino's, shalt be known their friend,
And with an equal flight to fame ascend.
The world shall hear, how Phœbus and the Nine
Were inmates once, and willing guests of thine.
Yet Phœbus, when of old constrain'd to roam
The earth, an exile from his heavenly home,
Enter'd, no willing guest, Admetus' door,
Though Hercules had ventured there before.
But gentle Chiron's cave was near, a scene
Of rural peace, clothed with perpetual green;
And thither, oft as respite he required
From rustic clamours loud, the god retired:
There many a time, on Peneus' bank reclined
At some oak's root, with ivy thick entwined,
Won by his hospitable friend's desire,
He soothed his pains of exile with the lyre.
Then shook the hills, then trembled Peneus' shore,
Nor Œta felt his load of forests more;
The upland elms descended to the plain,
And soften'd lynxes wonder'd at the strain.

Well may we think, O dear to all above!
Thy birth distinguish'd by the smile of Jove;
And that Apollo shed his kindliest power,
And Maia's son, on that propitious hour;
Since only minds so born can comprehend
A poet's worth, or yield that worth a friend.
Hence, on thy yet unfaded cheek appears
The lingering freshness of thy greener years;
Hence in thy front and features we admire
Nature unwither'd, and a mind entire.
O, might so true a friend to me belong,
So skill'd to grace the votaries of song,
Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
The kings and heroes of my native clime;
Arthur the chief, who even now prepares,
In subterraneous being, future wars,
With all his martial knights, to be restored
Each to his seat, around the federal board;
And, O! if spirit fail me not, disperse
Our Saxon plunderers in triumphant verse!
Then, after all, when with the past content,
A life I finish, not in silence spent,
Should he, kind mourner, o'er my death-bed bend,
I shall but need to say, "Be yet my friend!"
He too, perhaps, shall bid the marble breathe
To honour me, and with the graceful wreath,
Or of Parnassus, or the Paphian isle,
Shall bind my brows,—but I shall rest the while.

Then also, if the fruits of Faith endure,
And Virtue's promised recompense be sure,
Borne to those seats, to which the blest aspire
By purity of soul, and virtuous fire,
These rites as Fate permits, I shall survey
With eyes illumined by celestial day;
And, every cloud from my pure spirit driven,
Joy in the bright beatitude of heaven!

We may conceive what delight Milton had in talking with Manso about Tasso, and how it encouraged his own desire of poetical immortality. The honours paid to Tasso as a poet were of a kind of which the cold northern clime of England gave no example. Spenser had died in poverty, ruined and neglected: Shakspeare seems to have been little personally known in his lifetime; for nothing is recorded of his habits and private character.

But though Tasso was cruelly used by his inglorious and base prince, his countrymen worshipped him, and bore with all his eccentricities. In England, except by Chaucer and Spenser, there had been no great epics of fiction. The metrical narratives were, for the most part, dull chronicles: that fiery force, where life breathes in every line and every image, was almost unknown. It is by the invention of grand fables that poets must stand high: little patches of flowers—a style of similes and metaphors, will not do. The manners and credences of Europe, from the commencement of the crusades, afforded inexhaustible subjects of heroic poetry: fictions improved upon the romantic tales of the Provençal bards could never be wanting to the imagination or the lyre.

Milton returned by Venice, where he made a large collection of music for his father; and thence passed through Geneva, at which he made a short sojourn with John Deodate, a learned theologian and professor, the relation of his friend Charles Deodate, and became acquainted with Frederick Spanheim. Here he is supposed to have renewed his Calvinistic and puritanical prejudices. It is somewhat strange that this small place should have been the focus of all that troubled the governments of Europe for more than a century. They were not content with forming a republican government for their own petty canton, for which it was well suited, but struggled to turn all the great monarchies into republics.

The poet must have been delighted with the lake-scenery and Alpine summits of this magnificent country. yet, after the pomp of Italy, its splendid arts, its princely societies, its genial skies, its imaginative delights, men must have seemed here to have dwindled into formal and dull automatons. Here might be learning; but it was dry and tasteless: here was now no Beza, or D'Aubigné; nor any anticipation of the eloquent and passionate Rousseau, or spiritual De Staël, or historic and philosophical Sismondi.

I have endeavoured to find some traces of Milton's visit in Geneva; but have yet discovered none. I am told it is a mistake that the Deodate campagne at the adjoining village of Cologni, which Byron inhabited in 1816, was that which belonged to the Deodate family when Milton was here. In the "Livre des Anglais," preserved in the state-archives at the Hotel de Ville, are registers of the English (including John Knox), who took refuge here from 1554 to 1558, and had an English chapel in Geneva.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF MILTON'S PROSE WORKS.

In 1639 Milton returned to England: he had the grief of finding that his friend Charles Deodate was already dead: on that occasion he wrote the Latin pastoral entitled "Epitaphium Damonis." He now undertook the tutorship of his two nephews, John and Edward Phillips, and added to them some other pupils. Having professed to have been drawn back to England to take a part in the cause of liberty, then breaking out into open contest, Johnson considers this occupation a falling off from his boasted high intentions, and utters a growling sort of merriment at the failure. This is in the tone of the biographer's usual insults on the great bard: he is on these occasions coarse, pompous, and unjust. Milton did not

come home to take a part by the sword, but by the pen: if therefore he endeavoured to aid an incompetent income by taking pupils, what inconsistency was there in this! The sneer comes doubly ill from one who had been himself a schoolmaster.

It seems that Milton endeavoured to teach his scholars a wider range of knowledge than the Doctor thought practicable; whereupon follows that famous passage of Johnson, which has been so often cited, and which is so excellent, that I must repeat it again:—

"The purpose of Milton," he begins, "was to teach something more solid than the common literature of schools, by reading those authors that treat of physical subjects, such as the Georgic and astronomical treatises of the ancients. This was a scheme of improvement which seems to have busied many literary projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was wanting to the embellishments of life, formed the same plan of education in his imaginary college.

"But the truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or conversation; whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong: the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples which may be said to embody truth, and prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and justice are virtues and excellences of all times and all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary and at leisure. Physiological learning is of such rare emergence, that one may know another half his life without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostatics or astronomy; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears.

"Those authors, therefore, are to be read at schools that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation; and these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians.

"Let me not be censured for this digression as pedantic or paradoxical; for, if I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side. It was his labour to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life; but the innovators whom I oppose are turning off attention from life to nature. They seem to think that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars: Socrates was rather of opinion that what we had to learn was, how to do good and avoid evil.

"Ὀττι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακόντ' ἀγαθόντε τέτυκται."

Had Johnson always written so, what a beautiful and perfect work he would have made!

But now Milton's evil days began: he entered into thorny controversies which blind the imagination, and harden and embitter the heart. It was not for sublime talents, like his, to entangle themselves in these webs: his mighty genius could not move under the oppressive weight of so much abstruse, and, I will add, useless, though multifarious and astonishing learning. But I am bound to notice what has been stated on the other side. Fletcher, in the "Introductory Review of Milton's Prose Works," says, "Let us never think of John Milton as a poet, merely: however in that capacity he may have adorned our language, and benefited, by ennobling his species. He was a citizen also, with whom patriotism was as heroical a passion, prompting him to do his country service, as was that 'inward prompting' of poesy, by which he did his country honour. He was alive to all that was due from man to man in all the relations of life: he was invested with a power to mould the mind of a nation, and to lead the people into 'the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue.' The poet has long eclipsed the man: he has been imprisoned even in the temple of the Muses; and the very splendour of the bard seems to be our title to pass 'an act of oblivion' on the share he bore in the events and discussions of the momentous times in which he lived. Ought not, rather, his wide renown in this capacity to lead us to the contemplation and study of the whole of his character and his works? Sworn by a father, who knew what persecution

was, at the first altar of freedom erected in this land, he, a student of the finest temperament, bent on grasping all sciences, and professing none, and burning with intense ambition for distinction, forsook his harp, and 'the quiet and still air of delightful studies,' and devoted the energies of earliest and maturest manhood, to be aiding in the grandest crisis of the first of human causes: and he became the most conspicuous literary actor in the dreadful yet glorious drama of the grand rebellion. He beheld tyranny and intolerance trampling upon the most sacred prerogatives of God and man; and he was compelled by the nobility of his nature, by the obligations of virtue, by the loud summons of beleaguered truth; in short, by his patriotism as well as his piety, to lay down the lyre, whose earliest tones are yet so fascinating; to 'doff his garland and singing robes,' and to adventure within the circle of peril and glory; and buckling on the controversial panoply, he threw it off only when the various works of this volume, surpassed by none in any sort of eloquence, became the record and trophy of his achievements, and the worthy forerunners of those poems, which a whole people 'will not willingly let die.'"

The summit of fame is occupied by the poet, but the base of the vast elevation may justly be said to rest on these prose works: and we invite his admirers to descend from the former, and survey the region that lies round about the latter;—a less explored, but not less magnificent domain.

Fletcher has (p. vii.) inserted the following extract. In the "Second Defence of the people of England," Milton is led in self-defence, he says, "to rescue his life from that species of obscurity which is the associate of unprincipled depravity." He then commences in this strain his too brief autobiography:—

"This it will be necessary for me to do on more accounts than one: first, that so many good and learned men among the neighbouring nations, who read my works, may not be induced by this fellow's calumnies to alter the favourable opinion which they have formed of me, but may be persuaded that I am not one who ever disgraced beauty of sentiment by deformity of conduct, or the maxims of a freeman by the actions of a slave; and that the whole tenour of my life has, by the grace of God, hitherto been unsullied by any enormity or crime: next, that those illustrious worthies, who are the objects of my praise, may know that nothing could afflict me with more shame than to have any vices of mine diminish the force or lessen the value of my panegyric upon them; and, lastly, that the people of England, whom fate, or duty, or their own virtues, have incited me to defend, may be convinced from the purity and integrity of my life, that my defence, if it do not redound to their honour, can never be considered as their disgrace:—

"I will now mention who and whence I am. I was born at London, of an honest family: my father was distinguished by the undeviating integrity of his life; my mother, by the esteem in which she was held, and the alms which she bestowed. My father destined me from a child to the pursuits of literature; and my appetite for knowledge was so voracious, that from twelve years of age I hardly ever left my studies, or went to bed before midnight. This primarily led to my loss of sight: my eyes were naturally weak, and I was subject to frequent headaches; which, however, could not chill the ardour of my curiosity, or retard the progress of my improvement. My father had me daily instructed in the grammar school, and by other masters at home: he then, after I had acquired a proficiency in various languages, and had made a considerable progress in philosophy, sent me to the university of Cambridge. Here I passed seven years in the usual course of instruction and study, with the approbation of the good, and without any stain upon my character, till I took the degree of Master of Arts.

"After this I did not, as this miscreant feigns, run away into Italy, but of my own accord retired to my father's house, whither I was accompanied by the regrets of most of the fellows of the college, who showed me no common marks of friendship and esteem. On my father's estate, where he had determined to pass the remainder of his days, I enjoyed an interval of uninterrupted leisure, which I devoted entirely to the perusal of the Greek and Latin classics; though I occasionally visited the metropolis, either for the sake of purchasing books, or of learning something new in mathematics or in music, in which I, at that time, found a source of pleasure and amusement. In this manner I spent five years, till my mother's death: I then became anxious to visit foreign parts, and particularly Italy. My father gave me his permission, and I left home with one servant. On

my departure, the celebrated Henry Wotton, who had long been King James's ambassador at Venice, gave me a signal proof of his regard, in an elegant letter which he wrote, breathing not only the warmest friendship, but containing some maxims of conduct which I found very useful in my travels. The noble Thomas Scudamore, King Charles's ambassador, to whom I carried letters of recommendation, received me most courteously at Paris. His lordship gave me a card of introduction to the learned Hugo Grotius, at that time ambassador from the Queen of Sweden to the French court; whose acquaintance I anxiously desired, and to whose house I was accompanied by some of his lordship's friends. A few days after, when I set out for Italy, he gave me letters to the English merchants on my route, that they might show me any civilities in their power.

"Taking ship at Nice, I arrived at Genoa, and afterwards visited Leghorn, Pisa, and Florence. In the latter city, which I have always more particularly esteemed for the elegance of its dialect, its genius, and its taste, I stopped about two months; when I contracted an intimacy with many persons of rank and learning, and was a constant attendant at their literary parties; a practice which prevails there, and tends so much to the diffusion of knowledge and the preservation of friendship.

"No time will ever abolish the agreeable recollections which I cherish of Jacob Gaddi, Carolo Dati, Frescobaldo, Cultellero, Bonomatthai, Clementillo, Francisco, and many others.

"From Florence I went to Sienna, thence to Rome; where, after I had spent about two months in viewing the antiquities of that renowned city, where I experienced the most friendly attentions from Lucas Holstein, and other learned and ingenious men, I continued my route to Naples; there I was introduced by a certain recluse, with whom I had travelled from Rome, to John Baptista Manso, marquis of Villa, a nobleman of distinguished rank and authority, to whom Torquato Tasso, the illustrious poet, inscribed his book on 'Friendship.' During my stay, he gave me singular proofs of his regard; he himself conducted me round the city, and to the palace of the viceroy; and more than once paid me a visit at my lodgings. On my departure he gravely apologised for not having shown me more civility, which he said he had been restrained from doing, because I had spoken with so little reserve on matters of religion.

"When I was preparing to pass over into Sicily and Greece, the melancholy intelligence which I received of the civil commotions in England made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad, while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home.

"While I was on my way back to Rome, some merchants informed me that the English Jesuits had formed a plot against me if I returned to Rome, because I had spoken too freely of religion: for it was a rule which I laid down to myself in those places, never to be the first to begin any conversation on religion; but, if any questions were put to me concerning my faith, to declare it without any reserve or fear. I nevertheless returned to Rome. I took no steps to conceal either my person or my character; and for about the space of two months I again openly defended, as I had done before, the reformed religion in the very metropolis of Popery.

"By the favour of God, I got back to Florence, where I was received with as much affection as if I had returned to my native country. There I stopped as many months as I had done before, except that I made an excursion of a few days to Lucca; and crossing the Apennines, passed through Bologna and Ferrara to Venice.

"After I had spent a month in surveying the curiosities of this city, and had put on board a ship the books which I had collected in Italy, I proceeded through Verona and Milan, and along the Leman lake to Geneva.

"The mention of this city brings to my recollection the slandering More,* and makes me again call the Deity to witness, that in all those places, in which vice meets with so little discouragement, and is practised with so little shame, I never once deviated from the paths of integrity and virtue; and perpetually reflected that, though my conduct might escape the notice of men, it would not elude the inspection of God.

"At Geneva I held daily conferences with John Diodati, the learned professor of theology.

* Alexander More.

"Then, pursuing my former route through France, I returned to my native country, after an absence of one year and about three months, at the time when Charles, having broken the peace, was renewing what is called the episcopal war with the Scots; in which the royalists being routed in the first encounter, and the English being universally and justly disaffected, the necessity of his affairs at last obliged him to convene a parliament.

"As soon as I was able, I hired a spacious house in the city for myself and my books; where I again with rapture renewed my literary pursuits, and where I calmly awaited the issue of the contest, which I trusted to the wise conduct of Providence and to the courage of the people.

"The vigour of the parliament had begun to humble the pride of the bishops. As long as the liberty of speech was no longer subject to control, all mouths began to be opened against the bishops; some complained of the vices of the individuals; others, of those of the order. They said that it was unjust that they alone should differ from the model of other reformed churches, and particularly the word of God.

"This awakened all my attention and my zeal: I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; that the principles of religion, which were the first objects of our care, would exert a salutary influence on the manners and constitution of the republic; and as I had from my youth studied the distinctions between religious and civil rights, I perceived that, if I ever wished to be of use, I ought at least not to be wanting to my country, to the church, and to so many of my fellow-Christians, in a crisis of so much danger. I therefore determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object. I accordingly wrote two books to a friend, concerning 'The Reformation of the Church of England.'"

Here we have Milton's own account of his own early life, of which we cannot doubt the accuracy.

This treatise ends in the form of a prayer, "piously laying the sad condition of England before the footstool of the Almighty," than which there is not a more sublime patriotic Ode in any language. Thus:

"Thou therefore that sittest in light and glory unapproachable; Parent of angels and men! next, thee I implore, Omnipotent King, Redeemer of that last remnant, whose nature thou didst assume, ineffable and everlasting love! And thou, the third subsistence of divine infinitude, illumining Spirit, the joy and solace of created things, and Tripersonal Godhead! look upon this thy poor and almost spent and expiring Church: leave her not thus a prey to these importunate wolves, that wait and think it long, till they devour thy tender flock: those wild boars that have broken into thy vineyard, and left the print of their polluting hoofs on the souls of thy servants. O, let them not bring about their damning designs, that stand now at the entrance of the bottomless pit, expecting the watch-word to open and let out those dreadful locusts and scorpions, to re-involve us in that pitchy cloud of infernal darkness, where we shall never more see the sun of thy truth again; never hope for the cheerful dawn; never more hear the bird of morning sing. Be moved with pity at the afflicted state of this our shaken monarchy, that now lies labouring under her throes, and struggling against the grudges of more dreadful calamities.

"O Thou, that after the impetuous rage of five bloody inundations and the succeeding sword of intestine war, soaking the land in her own gore, didst pity the sad and ceaseless revolution of our swift and thick-coming sorrows; when we were quite breathless, of thy free grace didst motion peace and terms of covenant to us; and, having first well-nigh freed us from anti-christian thraldom, didst build up this Britannic empire to a glorious and enviable height, with all her daughter-islands about her; stay us in this felicity: let not the obstinacy of our half-obedience and will-worship bring forth that viper of sedition, that, for these fourscore years, has been breeding to eat through the entrails of our peace; but let her cast her abortive spawn without the danger of this travailing and throbbing kingdom, that we may still remember in our solemn thanksgivings, how for us the northern ocean, even to the frozen Thule, was scattered with the proud shipwrecks of the Spanish armada; and the very maw of hell ransacked, and made to give up her concealed destination, ere she could vent it in that horrible and damned blast.

"O, how much more glorious will those former deliverances appear, when we shall know them not only to have saved us from greater miseries past, but have reserved us for greater happiness to come! Hitherto thou hast but freed us, and that not fully, from the unjust and tyrannous claim of thy foes; now, unite us entirely, and appropriate us to thyself; tie us everlastingly in willing homage to the prerogative of thy eternal throne.

"And now we know, O Thou our most certain hope and defence, that thine enemies have been consulting all the sorceries of the great whore, and have joined their plots with that sad intelligencing tyrant that mischiefs the world with his mines of Ophir, and lies thirsting to revenge his naval ruins that have larded our seas: but let them all take counsel together, and let it come to nought; let them decree, and do Thou cancel it; let them gather themselves, and be scattered; let them embattel themselves, and be broken; let them embattel, and be broken, for Thou art with us!

"Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may perhaps be heard offering at high strains, in new and lofty measures, to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages, whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her old vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when Thou, the eternal and shortly-expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of this world; and distributing national honours and rewards to religious and just commonwealths, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies, proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they, undoubtedly, that, by their labours, counsels, and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, shall receive, above the inferior orders of the blessed, the regal addition of principalities, legions, and thrones, into their glorious titles; and in supereminence of beatific vision, progressing the doubtless and irrevoluble circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss, in over-measure for ever."

It would be quite impossible to give an adequate account of Milton's life and character, were I to omit here to insert the whole of the Preface to the second book of his "Reason of Church Government urged against Prelates," of which parts only have been hitherto extracted by former biographers:—

"How happy were it for this frail, and, as it may be called, mortal life of man, since all earthly things which have the name of good and convenient in our daily use, are withal so cumbersome and full of trouble, if knowledge, yet which is the best, and lightsomest possession of the mind, were, as the common saying is, no burden; and that what it wanted of being a load to any part of the body, it did not with a heavy advantage overlay upon the spirit.

"For, not to speak of that knowledge that rests in the contemplation of natural causes and dimensions, which must needs be a lower wisdom as the object is low, certain it is, that he who hath obtained in more than the scantiest measure to know any thing distinctly of God, and of his true worship, and what is infallibly good and happy in the state of man's life; what in itself evil and miserable, though vulgarly not so esteemed; he, that hath obtained to know this, the only high valuable wisdom indeed, remembering also that God, even to a strictness, requires the improvement of these his entrusted gifts, cannot but sustain a sorer burden of mind, and more pressing than any supportable toil or weight which the body can labour under; how and in what manner he shall dispose and employ those sums of knowledge and illumination, which God hath sent him into this world to trade with.

"And that which aggravates the burden more is, that, having received amongst his allotted parcels, certain precious truths, of such an orient lustre as no diamond can equal, which nevertheless he has in charge to put off at any cheap rate, yea, for nothing, to them that will; the great merchants of this world, fearing that this course would soon discover and disgrace the false glitter of their deceitful wares, wherewith they abuse the people, like poor Indians, with beads and glasses, practise by all means how they may suppress the vending of such rarities, and at such a cheapness as would undo them, and turn their trash upon their hands.

"Therefore, by gratifying the corrupt desires of men in fleshly doctrines, they stir them up to persecute with hatred and contempt all those that seek to bear

themselves uprightly in this their spiritual factory; which they foreseeing, though they cannot but testify of truth and the excellency of that heavenly traffic which they bring, against what opposition or danger soever, yet needs it must sit heavily upon their spirits, that being in God's prime intention, and their own, selected heralds of peace and dispensers of treasure inestimable, without price to them that have no peace; they find in the discharge of their commission, that they are made the greatest variance and offence, a very sword and fire, both in house and city, over the whole earth.

"This is that which the sad prophet Jeremiah laments:—'Wo is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and contention!' And, although divine inspiration must certainly have been sweet to those ancient prophets, yet the irksomeness of that truth which they brought was so unpleasant unto them, that everywhere they call it a burden. Yea, that mysterious Book of Revelation which the great evangelist was bid to eat, as it had been some eye-brightening electuary of knowledge and foresight, though it were 'sweet in his mouth,' and in the learning, 'it was bitter in his belly,' bitter in the denouncing.

"Nor was this hid from the wise poet Sophocles, who, in that place of his tragedy where Tiresias is called to resolve king Œdipus in a matter which he knew would be grievous, brings him in bemoaning his lot, that he knew more than other men.

"For surely to every good and peaceable man, it must in nature needs be a hateful thing to be the displeaser and molester of thousands: much better would it like him doubtless to be the messenger of gladness and contentment, which is his chief intended business to all mankind, but that they resist and oppose their own happiness.

"But when God commands to take the trumpet, and blow a dolorous or jarring blast, it lies not in man's will what he shall say or what he shall conceal. If he shall think to be silent as Jeremiah did, because of the reproach and derision he met with daily, 'and all his familiar friends watched for his halting,' to be revenged on him for speaking the truth, he would be forced to confess as he confessed; 'his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay.'

"Which might teach these times not suddenly to condemn all things that are sharply spoken or vehemently written as proceeding out of stomach virulence and ill-nature; but to consider rather, that if the prelates have leave to say the worst that can be said, or do the worst that can be done, while they strive to keep to themselves, to their great pleasure and commodity, those things which they ought to render up, no man can be justly offended with him that shall endeavour to impart and bestow, without any gain to himself, those sharp and saving words, which would be a terror and a torment in him to keep back.

"For me, I have endeavoured to lay up as the best treasure and solace of a good old age, if God vouchsafe it me, the honest liberty of free speech from my youth, where I shall think it available in so dear a concernment as the church's good. For, if I be, whether by disposition, or what other cause, too inquisitive, or suspicious of myself and mine own doings, who can help it?

"But this I foresee, that should the church be brought under heavy oppression, and God have given me ability the while to reason against that man that should be the author of so foul a deed; or should she, by blessing from above on the industry and courage of faithful men, change this her distracted estate into better days, without the least furtherance or contribution of those few talents, which God at that present had lent me; I foresee what stories I should hear within myself, all my life after, of discourage and reproach. Timorous and ungrateful, the church of God is now again at the foot of her insulting enemies, and thou bewailest;—what matters it for thee, or thy bewailing? When time was, thou couldst not find a syllable of all that thou has read or studied, to utter in her behalf: yet ease and leisure was given thee for thy retired thoughts, out of the sweat of other men. Thou hast the diligence, the parts, the language of a man, if a vain subject were to be adorned or beautified; but when the cause of God and his church was to be pleaded, for which purpose that tongue was given thee which thou hast, God listened if he could hear thy voice among his zealous servants, but thou wert dumb as a beast: from henceforward be that which thine own brutish silence hath made thee!

"Or else I should have heard on the other ear,—Slothful, and ever to be set light

by, the church hath now overcome her late distresses after the unwearied labours of many her true servants that stood up in her defence; thou also wouldst take upon thee to share amongst them of their joy; but wherefore thou? Where canst thou show any word or deed of thine, which might have hastened her peace? Whatever thou dost now talk, or write, or look, is the alms of other men's active prudence and zeal. Dare not now to say or do any thing better than thy former sloth and infamy; or, if thou darest, thou dost impudently to make a thrifty purchase of boldness to thyself, out of the painful merits of other men. What before was thy sin, is now thy duty, to be abject and worthless.

"These, and such-like lessons as these, I know would have been my matins duly, and my even-song: but now by this little diligence mark what a privilege I have gained with good men and saints, to claim my right of lamenting the tribulations of the church, if she should suffer, when others, that have ventured nothing for her sake, have not the honour to be admitted mourners: but, if she lift up her drooping head and prosper, among those that have something more than wished her welfare, I have my charter and freehold of rejoicing to me and my King.

"Concerning therefore this wayward subject against prelates, the touching whereof is so distasteful and disquietous to a number of men; as by what hath been said I may deserve of charitable readers to be credited, that neither envy nor gall hath entered me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only, and a preventive fear lest this duty should be against me, when I would store up to myself the good provision of peaceful hours; so, lest it should be still imputed to me, as I have found it hath been, that some self-pleasing humour of vain-glory hath incited me to contest with men of high estimation, now while green years are upon my head; from this needless surmisal I shall hope to dissuade the intelligent and equal auditor, if I can but say successfully that which in this exigent behoves me; although I would be heard only, if it might be, by the elegant and learned reader, to whom principally for a while I shall beg leave I may address myself.

"To him it will be no new thing, though I tell him that if I hunted after praise, by the estimation of wit and learning, I should not write thus out of mine own season when I have neither yet completed to my mind the full circle of my private studies, although I complain not of any insufficiency to the matter in hand; or were I ready to my wishes, it were a folly to commit any thing elaborately composed to the careless and interrupted listening of these tumultuous times.

"Next, if I were wise only to my own ends, I would certainly take such a subject as of itself might catch applause (whereas this hath all the disadvantages on the contrary), and such a subject as the publishing whereof might be delayed at pleasure, and time enough to pencil it over with all the curious touches of art, even to the perfection of a faultless picture; whereas in this argument the not deferring is of great moment to the good speeding, that, if solidity have leisure to do her office, art cannot have much.

"Lastly, I should not choose this manner of writing, wherein knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account, but of my left hand: and though I shall be foolish in saying more to this purpose, yet, since it will be such a folly as wisest men go about to commit, having only confessed and so committed, I may trust with more reason, because with more folly, to have courteous pardon: for, although a poet soaring in the high reason of his fancies, with his garland and singing robes about him, might, without apology, speak more of himself than I mean to do; yet for me sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing among many readers of no empyreal conceit, to venture and indulge unusual things of myself, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me.

"I must say, therefore, that after I had for my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense), been exercised to the tongues, and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers at home and at the school, it was found, that whether ought was imposed me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of my own choice in English, or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly this latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live.

"But much latelier in the private academies of Italy, whither I was favoured to resort, perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, composed at under

twenty or thereabout (for the manner is, that every one must give some proof of his wit and reading there), met with acceptance above what was looked for; and other things, which I had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to pack up amongst them, were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps; I began thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting, which now grew daily upon me, that with labour and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die.

"These thoughts at once possessed me; and these other, that if I were certain to write as men buy leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had, than to God's glory, by the honour and instruction of my country.

"For which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution which Ariosto followed against the persuasions of Bembo, to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue; not to make verbal curiosities the end (that were a toilsome vanity), but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things, among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother dialect: that, what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above, of being a Christian, might do for mine; not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that; but content with these British islands as my world; whose fortune hath hitherto been, that, if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, England hath had her noble achievements made small by the unskilful handling of monks and mechanics.

"Time serves not now, and perhaps I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting; whether that epic form whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief model;—or whether the rules of Aristotle herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be followed, which in them that show art, and use judgment, is no transgression, but an enriching of art: or, lastly, what king, or knight, before the Conquest, might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero.

"And, as Tasso gave to a prince of Italy his choice, whether he would command him to write of Godfrey's expedition against the infidels, or Belisarius against the Goths, or Charlemagne against the Lombards; if to the instinct of nature and emboldening of art aught may be trusted, and there be nothing adverse in our climate or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in our own ancient stories; or whether those dramatic compositions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation.

"The Scripture also affords us a divine pastoral drama in the 'Song of Solomon,' consisting of two persons, and a double chorus, as Origen rightly judges: and the 'Apocalypse' of St. John is the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies; and this, my opinion, the grave authority of Paræus, commenting that book, is sufficient to confirm.

"Or, if occasion shall lead to imitate those magnific odes and hymns, wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are, in most things, worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most an end faulty.

"But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets, beyond all these, not in their divine arguments alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable.

"These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some, though most abused, in every nation; and are of power, beside the office of a pulpit, to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility; to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the

deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship.

"Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime; in virtue amiable or grave; whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and refluxes of man's thoughts from within; all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe: tracking over the whole book of sanctity and virtue, through all the instances of example, with such delight to those especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon truth herself, unless they see her elegantly dressed; that, whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they will then appear to all men both easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed.

"And what a benefit this would be to our youth and gentry, may be soon guessed by what we know of the corruption and bane, which they suck in daily from the writings and interludes of libidinous and ignorant poetasters, who having scarce ever heard of that which is the main consistence of a true poem, the choice of such persons as they ought to introduce, and what is moral and decent to each one; do for the most part lay up vicious principles in sweet pills to be swallowed down, and make the taste of virtuous documents harsh and sour.

"But, because the spirit of man cannot demean itself lively in this body without some recreating intermission of labour and serious things, it were happy for the commonwealth, if our magistrates, as in those famous governments of old, would take into their care, not only the deciding of our contentious law cases and brawls, but the managing of our public sports and festival pastimes; that they might be, not such as were authorised awhile since, the provocations of drunkenness and lust, but such as may inure and harden our bodies by martial exercises to all warlike skill and performance; and may civilise, adorn, and make discreet our minds, by the learned and affable meeting of frequent academies, and the procurement of wise and artful recitations, sweetened with eloquent and graceful inticements to the love and practice of justice, temperance, and fortitude, instructing and bettering the nation at all opportunities, that the call of wisdom and virtue may be heard every where, as Solomon saith, 'she crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets, on the top of high places, in the chief concourse, and in the openings of the gates.'

"Whether this may not be, not only in pulpits, but after another persuasive method at set and solemn panegyrics, in theatres, porches, or what other place or way may win most upon the people, to receive at once both recreation and instruction, let them in authority consult.

"The thing which I had to say, and those intentions which have lived within me ever since I could conceive myself anything worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath plucked from me, by an abortive and foredated discovery; and the accomplishment of those lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend; and that the land had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelates, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit can flourish.

"Neither do I think it shame to covenant with my knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted; as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained from the invocation of dame Memory and her syren daughters; but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.

"To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compassed, at my own peril and cost, I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them.

"Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much beforehand, but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies, to come into the dim reflection of hollow antiquities sold by the seeming bulk, and there be fain to club quotations with men whose learning and belief lies in marginal stuffings, who, when they have, like good sumpters, laid ye down their horse-loads of citations and fathers at your door, with a rhapsody of who and who were bishops here or there, ye may take off their pack-saddles, their day's work is done, and episcopacy, as they think, stoutly vindicated. Let any gentle apprehension, that can distinguish learned pains from unlearned drudgery, imagine what pleasure or profoundness can be in this, or what honour to deal against such adversaries.

"But were it the meanest under-service, if God by his secretary conscience enjoin it, it were sad for me if I should draw back; for me especially now when all men offer their aid to help, ease, and lighten the difficult labours of the church, to whose service, by the intentions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child, and in my own resolutions; till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure himself, or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the learned office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing.

"However thus church-outed by the prelates, hence may appear the right I have to meddle in these matters, as before the necessity and constraint appeared."

CHAPTER X.

OF MILTON'S MARRIAGE.

Milton was now thirty-four years old, when he seems to have taken upon himself suddenly the resolution to marry: his choice fell on Mary, daughter of Richard Powell, Esq., of Forest Hill, near Shotover, in Oxfordshire, an active royalist, who lived gaily and expensively. The match was ill-suited, and did not turn out happily. He was caught by the lady's beauty, but found neither her mind nor her disposition accordant: she was soon tired of his studious habits and quiet unvisited house, after the company to which she had been accustomed at her father's mansion. In a few weeks she requested permission to revisit her father, where she stayed, in defiance of his remonstrance, the whole summer: she would not even answer his letters. This so provoked him, that he resolved to divorce her; and to justify his resolution, published, in 1644, his "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, restored to the good of both sexes." "He declares," says Fletcher, "his object to be to prove, first, that other reasons of divorce besides adultery were, by the law of Moses, and are yet to be, allowed by the Christian magistrate, as a piece of justice, and that the words of Christ are not hereby contraried: next, that to prohibit absolutely any divorce whatever, except those which Moses excepted, is against the reason of law. The grand position is this:—that indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature, unchangeable, hindering, and ever likely to hinder, the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace, is a greater reason of divorce than adultery, provided there be a mutual consent for separation."

He next published the "Tetrachordon, or Exposition of the four chief places in Scripture, which treat of Nullities in Marriage." Thirdly, "The Judgment of the famous Martin Bucer touching divorce." Fourthly, "Colasterion," a reply to a nameless answer to his first work.

These tracts raised a great clamour against the author. It seems to me probable, that the lady married Milton against her will, at the instigation of her parents. Todd has discovered documents, which show that an acquaintance had subsisted between Powell and Milton's father, a native of Oxfordshire, and that

Powell had borrowed money of him, which was not paid at the former's death. Powell was a distressed and ruined man, expensive and reckless: it is probable, therefore, that he may have sacrificed his daughter, who soon was willing to escape from one not suited to her habits of life.

This conjecture is in concurrence with some ingenious surmises of Mitford, founded on certain passages which he has extracted from Milton's tracts. Mrs. Milton seems to have been a dull, unintellectual, insensate woman, though possessed of outward personal beauty.

She was alarmed at last, when she found Milton in earnest to take another wife, and contrived an interview, at which she begged his pardon, and was restored to her home, where she died in a few years: but I doubt, from certain passages in Milton's poetry, if he did not think that he had yielded to her tears with too much softness.

The whole of the documents relative to Milton's claim on Powell's property, which are set forth at length by Todd, who recovered them from the public archives, are very curious. It appears that it was as early as 1627, when Milton was a student at Cambridge, that his father advanced 500*l*. to Powell on mortgage, to his son's use. I take this to have been a settlement made as a provision for the poet.

When Powell died, loaded with debt, in Jan. 1646–7, Milton took possession of the mortgaged property, and the widow, with eight children, was left penniless; she claimed her thirds for dower, but could not obtain them.

Upon Mrs. Powell's petition, 19th April, 1651, the following notes are made:—

"By the law Mrs. Powell might recover her thirds, without doubt: but she is so extremely poor, she hath not wherewithal to prosecute; and besides, Mr. Milton is a harsh and choleric man, and married Mr. Powell's daughter, who would be undone if any such course were taken against him by Mrs. Powell; he having turned away his wife heretofore for a long space, upon some other occasion."

The date of the death of this first wife of Milton is said to have been 1653. His father died in 1647, in the poet's house, who had also received under his hospitable roof the ruined family of Powell, till their father died; but he seems to have been upon no terms with the widow.

CHAPTER XI.

HIS VARIOUS LITERARY OCCUPATIONS.

In 1645 the collection of Milton's early poems was published by Humphrey Mosely, the fashionable publisher of poetry of that age.

In 1641 came out "Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence against Smectymnuus."

Next year, "An Apology for Smectymnuus," in reply to Bishop Hall's or his son's "Modest Confutation against a scandalous and seditious Libel." This is Milton's last work on the puritan side of the controversy.

In 1644 he published his "Tractate of Education: to Master Samuel Hartlib."

The month of November of this year produced the "Areopagitica; a Speech for the liberty of Unlicensed Printing. To the Parliament of England." Mitford pronounces this to be the finest production in prose from Milton's pen. "For vigour and eloquence of style, unconquerable force of argument, majesty and richness of language, it is not to be surpassed."

In 1648–9 he published "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates: proving that it is lawful, and hath been held so through all ages, for any, who have the power, to call to account a tyrant or wicked king, and after due conviction to depose and put him to death, if the ordinary magistrate have neglected or denied to do it; and that they, who of late so much blame deposing, are the men that did it themselves."

This tract was a defence of the execution of King Charles, against the objections of the Presbyterians.

The very title of this treatise is surely in the highest degree objectionable, and does not in these days require any refutation. To say the truth, this is a part of Milton's character which puzzles me—and no other. This bloodthirstiness does not agree with his sanctity, and other mental and moral qualities. I will not say that

kings may not be deposed: but Charles I. ought not to have been deposed, much less put to death. In the poet, however, posterity has forgotten the regicide.

In 1648–9 came out his "Observations on the Articles of Peace between James Earl of Ormond for King Charles the First on the one hand, and the Irish Rebels and Papists on the other hand: and on a letter sent by Ormond to Colonel Jones, Governor of Dublin: and a Representation of the Scots Presbytery at Belfast in Ireland," &c.

"Such," says Milton, "were the fruits of my private studies, which I gratuitously presented to the church and to the state, and for which I was recompensed by nothing but impunity, though the actions themselves procured me peace of conscience and the approbation of the good: while I exercised that freedom of discussion which I loved. Others, without labour or desert, got the possession of honours and emoluments; but no one ever knew me, either soliciting anything myself, or through the medium of my friends; ever beheld me in a supplicating posture at the doors of the senate or the levees of the great. I usually kept myself secluded at home, where my own property, part of which had been withheld during the civil commotions, and part of which had been absorbed in the oppressive contributions which I had to sustain, afforded me a scanty subsistence. When I was released from these engagements, and thought that I was about to enjoy an interval of uninterrupted ease, I turned my thoughts to a history of my country, from the earliest times to the present period."

In 1649, Milton says, "I had already finished four books of the history, when after the subversion of the monarchy, and the establishment of a republic, I was surprised by an invitation from the council of state, who desired my services in the office of foreign affairs. A book appeared soon after, which was ascribed to the king, and contained the most insidious charges against the Parliament. I was ordered to answer it, and opposed the Iconoclast to the Icon."

The title is "ΕΙΚΟΝΟΚΛΑΣΤΗΣ: in answer to a book entitled ΕΙΚΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ, the portraiture of his majesty in his solitudes and sufferings."

A question has been raised, and fiercely battled of late, as to the genuineness of the "Icon Basilike." The circumstantial evidence seems strong that it was composed by Bishop Gauden.*

Besides that every reader must be curious about this exordium, it would be doing great injustice to Milton's prose works to omit the following extract from the preface to this extraordinary production:—

"To descant on the misfortunes of a person fallen from so high a dignity, who hath also paid his final debt both to nature and his faults, is neither of itself a thing commendable, nor the intention of this discourse. Neither was it fond ambition, nor the vanity to get a name, present or with posterity, by writing against a king. I never was so thirsty after fame, nor so destitute of other hopes and means, better and more certain to attain it: for kings have gained glorious titles from their favourites by writing against private men, as Henry VIII. did against Luther; but no man ever gained much honour by writing against a king, as not usually meeting with that force of argument in such courtly antagonists, which to convince might add to his reputation. Kings most commonly, though strong in legions, are but weak in arguments; as they who ever have accustomed from the cradle to use their will only as their right hand, their reason always as their left. Whence unexpectedly constrained to that kind of combat, they prove but weak and puny adversaries; nevertheless, for their sakes, who through custom, simplicity, or want of better teaching, have no more seriously considered kings, than in the gaudy name of majesty, and admire them and their doings as if they breathed not the same breath with other mortal men, I shall make no scruple to take up (for it seems to be the challenge both of him and all his party) to take up this gauntlet, though a king's, in the behalf of liberty and the commonwealth.

"First, then, that some men (whether this were by him intended, or by his friends) have by policy accomplished after death that revenge upon their enemies, which in life they were not able, hath been oft related: and among other examples we find, that the last will of Cæsar being read to the people, and what bounteous legacies he hath bequeathed them, wrought more on that vulgar audience to the

* See Todd's Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 1825.

avenging of his death, than all the art he could ever use to win their favour in his lifetime. And how much their intent, who publish these overlate apologies and meditations of the dead king, drives to the same end of stirring up the people to bring him that honour, that affection, and by consequence that revenge to his dead corps, which he himself living could never gain to his person, it appears both by the conceited portraiture before his book, drawn out to the full measure of a masking scene, and set there to catch fools and silly gazers; and by those Latin words after the end, 'Vota dabunt quæ bella negarunt;' intimating, that what he could not compass by war, he should achieve by his meditations: for in words which admit of various sense, the liberty is ours, to choose that interpretation, which may best mind us of what our restless enemies endeavour and what we are timely to prevent. And here may be well observed the loose and negligent curiosity of those, who took upon them to adorn the setting out of this book; for though the picture set in front would martyr him and saint him to befool the people, yet the Latin motto in the end, which they understand not, leaves him, as it were, a political contriver to bring about that interest, by fair and plausible words, which the force of arms denied him. But quaint emblems and devices, begged from the whole pageantry of some twelfth night's entertainment at Whitehall, will do but ill to make a saint or martyr: and if the people resolve to take him sainted at the rate of such a canonising, I shall suspect their calendar more than the Gregorian. In one thing I must commend his openness, who gave the title to this book, Εἰκὼν Βασιλική, that is to say the King's Image; and by the shrine he dresses out for him, certainly would have the people come and worship him. For which reason this answer also is entitled Iconoclastes, the famous surname of many Greek emperors, who in their zeal to the command of God, after long tradition of idolatry in the church, took courage, and broke all superstitious images to pieces. But the people, exorbitant and excessive in all their motions, are prone ofttimes not to a religous only, but to a civil kind of idolatry, in idolising their Kings: though never more mistaken in the object of their worship; heretofore being wont to repute for saints those faithful and courageous barons, who lost their lives in the field, making glorious war against tyrants for the common liberty; as Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester, against Henry III.; Thomas Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster, against Edward II. But now with a besotted and degenerate baseness of spirit, except some few who yet retain in them the old English fortitude and love of freedom, and have testified it by their matchless deeds, the rest, inbastardised from the ancient nobleness of their ancestors, are ready to fall flat and give adoration to the image and memory of this man, who hath offered at more cunning fetches to undermine our liberties, and put tyranny into an art, than any British king before him: which low dejection and debasement of mind in the people, I must confess, I cannot willingly ascribe to the natural disposition of an Englishman, but rather to two other causes; first, to the prelates and their fellow-teachers, though of another name and sect,* whose pulpit-stuff, both first and last, hath been the doctrine and perpetual infusion of servility and wretchedness to all their hearers, and whose lives the type of worldliness and hypocrisy, without the least true pattern of virtue, righteousness, or self-denial in their whole practice. I attribute it next to the factious inclination of most men divided from the public by several ends and humours of their own. At first no man less beloved, no man more generally condemned, than was the King; from the time that it became his custom to break parliaments at home, and either wilfully or weakly to betray Protestants abroad to the beginning of these combustions. All men inveighed against him; all men, except court vassals, opposed him and his tyrannical proceedings; the cry was universal; and this full parliament was at first unanimous in their dislike and protestation against his evil government: but when they who sought themselves and not the public began to doubt, that all of them could not by one and the same way attain to their ambitious purposes, then was the King, or his name at least, as a fit property first made use of, his doings made the best of, and by degrees justified; which begot him such a party, as, after many wiles and strugglings with his inward fears, emboldened him at length to set up his standard against the parliament: whenas before that time, all his adherents, consisting most of dissolute

* The Presbyterians.

swordsmen and suburb-roysters, hardly amounted to the making up of one ragged regiment strong enough to assault the unarmed house of commons. After which attempt, seconded by a tedious and bloody war on his subjects, wherein he hath so far exceeded those his arbitrary violences in time of peace, they who before hated him for his high misgovernment, nay, fought against him with displayed banners in the field, now applaud him and extol him for the wisest and most religious Prince that lived. By so strange a method amongst the mad multitude is a sudden reputation won, of wisdom by wilfulness and subtle shifts, of goodness by multiplying evil, of piety by endeavouring to root out true religion.

"But it is evident that the chief of his adherents never loved him, never honoured either him or his cause, but as they took him to set a face upon their own malignant designs; nor bemoan his loss at all, but the loss of their own aspiring hopes: like those captive women, whom the poet notes in his Iliad, to have bewailed the death of Patroclus in outward show, but indeed their own condition:—

Πάτροκλον πρόφασιν, σφῶν δ' αὐτῶν κήδε' ἑκάστη."

I do not by this insertion mean that my consent should be implied to Milton's principles and arguments in this extraordinary production, but to exhibit it as a proof of a gigantic mind. The style is hard and Latinised; but after a few pages, when the ear is familiarised to it, it strikes by its extraordinary force, precision, and originality; by the copiousness of its learning, and the unexpected subtlety of its arguments.

Milton now entered into the famous controversy with Salmasius. By the order of the state he wrote "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano contra Claudii Anonymi, alias Salmasii Defensionem Regiam," 1651, afterwards translated into English by Washington. Salmasius (Claude de Saumaise) had the reputation of one of the greatest scholars of the age. In some respects this dispute was disgraced by the grossest personalities on both sides: many think that Milton destroyed Salmasius's title to classicality: Mitford's opinion is otherwise; and he has discussed the question with much erudition, research, and taste.

This book raised the reputation of Milton upon the Continent. He says,* "I am about to discourse of matters, neither inconsiderable nor common; but how a most potent king, after he had trampled upon the laws of the nation, and given a shock to its religion, and begun to rule at his own will and pleasure, was at last subdued in the field by his own subjects, who had undergone a long slavery under him; how afterwards he was cast into prison; and when he gave no ground, either by words or actions, to hope better things of him, he was finally by the supreme council of the kingdom condemned to die, and beheaded before the very gates of the royal palace. I shall likewise relate (which will much conduce to the easing of men's minds of a great superstition) by what right, especially according to our law, this judgment was given, and all these matters transacted; and shall easily defend my valiant and worthy countrymen (who have extremely well deserved of all subjects and nations in the world) from the most wicked calumnies both of domestic and foreign railers, and especially from the reproaches of this most vain and empty sophister, who sets up for a captain and ringleader to all the rest. For what king's majesty sitting upon an exalted throne, ever shone so brightly, as that of the people of England then did, when shaking off that old superstition, which had prevailed a long time, they gave judgment upon the king himself, or rather upon an enemy who had been their king, caught as it were in a net by his own laws (who alone of all mortals challenged to himself impunity by a divine right), and scrupled not to inflict the same punishment upon him, being guilty, which he would have inflicted upon any other? But why do I mention these things as performed by the people, which almost open their voice themselves, and testify the presence of God throughout? who, as often as it seems good to his infinite wisdom, uses to throw down proud and unruly kings, exalting themselves above the condition of human nature, and utterly to extirpate them and all their family. By his manifest impulse being set on work to recover our almost lost liberty, following him as our guide, and adoring the impresses of his divine power manifested upon all occasions, we went on in no obscure, but an illustrious passage, pointed out and made plain to us by God himself. Which things, if I should so much as hope by any diligence or ability of mine, such

* From the translation by Washington.

as it is, to discourse of as I ought to do, and to commit them so to writing, as that perhaps all nations and all ages may read them, it would be a very vain thing in me: for what style can be august and magnificent enough, what man has parts sufficient to undertake so great a task? Since we find by experience, that in so many ages as are gone over the world, there has been but here and there a man found, who has been able worthily to recount the actions of great heroes and potent states; can any man have so good an opinion of his own talents, as to think himself capable to reach these glorious and wonderful works of Almighty God, by any language, by any style of his? Which enterprise, though some of the most eminent persons in our commonwealth have prevailed upon me by their authority to undertake, and would have it be my business to vindicate with my pen against envy and calumny (which are proof against arms) those glorious performances of theirs (whose opinion of me I take as a very great honour, that they should pitch upon me before others to be serviceable in this kind of those most valiant deliverers of my native country; and true it is, that from my very youth I have been bent extremely upon such sort of studies, as inclined me, if not to do great things myself, at least to celebrate those that did), yet as having no confidence in any such advantages, I have recourse to the divine assistance; and invoke the great and holy God, the giver of all good gifts, that I may as substantially, and as truly discourse and refute the sauciness and lies of this foreign declamator, as our noble generals piously and successfully by force of arms, broke the king's pride and his unruly domineering, and afterwards put an end to both by inflicting a memorable punishment upon himself, and as thoroughly as a single person did with ease, but of late confute and confound the king himself, rising as it were from the grave, and recommending himself to the people in a book published after his death, with new artifices and allurements of words and expressions. Which antagonist of mine, though he be a foreigner, and, though he deny it a thousand times over, but a poor grammarian; yet not contented with a salary due to him in that capacity, chose to turn a pragmatical coxcomb, and not only to intrude in state affairs, but into the affairs of a foreign state; though he brings along with him neither modesty, nor understanding, nor any other qualification requisite in so great an arbitrator, but sauciness, and a little grammar only. Indeed, if he had published here, and in English, the same things as he has now wrote in Latin, such as it is, I think no man would have thought it worth while to return an answer to them, but would partly despise them as common, and exploded over and over already; and partly abhor them as sordid and tyrannical maxims, not to be endured even by the most abject of slaves: nay, men that have sided with the king, would have had these thoughts of his book. But since he has swoln it to a considerable bulk, and dispersed it amongst foreigners, who are altogether ignorant of our affairs and constitution, it is fit that they who mistake them should be better informed; and that he who is so very forward to speak ill of others, should be treated in his own kind. If it be asked why we did not then attack him sooner, why we suffered him to triumph so long, and pride himself in our silence? for others I am not to answer; for myself I can boldly say, that I had neither words nor arguments long to seek for the defence of so good a cause, if I had enjoyed such a measure of health as would have endured the fatigue of writing: and being but weak in body, I am forced to write by piecemeal, and break off almost every hour, though the subject be such as requires an unintermitted study and intenseness of mind. But though this bodily indisposition may be a hindrance to me in setting forth the just praises of my most worthy countrymen, who have been the saviours of their native country, and whose exploits, worthy of immortality, are already famous all the world over; yet I hope it will be no difficult matter for me to defend them from the insolence of this silly little scholar, and from that saucy tongue of his at least. Nature and laws would be in an ill case, if slavery should find what to say for itself, and liberty be mute; and if tyrants should find men to plead for them, and they that can master and vanquish tyrants should not be able to find advocates: and it were a deplorable thing indeed, if the reason mankind is endued withal, and which is the gift of God, should not furnish more arguments for men's preservation, for their deliverance, and, as much as the nature of the thing will bear, for making them equal to one another, than for their oppression, and for their utter ruin under the domineering power of one single person. Let me therefore enter upon this noble cause with a cheerfulness, grounded

upon this assurance, that my adversary's cause is maintained by nothing but fraud, fallacy, ignorance, and barbarity; whereas mine has light, truth, reason, the practice and the learning of the best ages of the world, of its side."

In 1654 Milton published his "Defensio secunda contra Infamem Libellum Anonymum, cui titulus, Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Cœlum adversus Parricidas Anglicanos."*

This commences with another magnificent passage regarding himself:—

"Jam videor mihi, ingressus iter, transmarinos tractus et porrectas late regiones, sublimis perlustrare; vultus innumeros atque ignotos, animi sensus mecum conjunctissimos: hinc Germanorum virile et infestum servituti robur, inde Francorum vividi dignique nomine liberales impetus, hinc Hispanorum consulta virtus, Italorum inde sedata suique compos magnanimitas ob oculos versatur. Quicquid uspiam liberorum pectorum, quicquid ingenui, quicquid magnanimi aut prudens latet aut se palam profitetur, alii tacite favere, alii aperte suffragari, accurrere alii et plausu accipere, alii tandem vero victi, dedititios se tradere. Videor jam mihi, tantis circumseptus copiis, ab Herculeis usque columnis ad extremos Liberi patris terminos, libertatem diu pulsam atque exulem, longo intervallo domum ubique gentium reducere: et, quod Triptolemus olim fertur, sed longe nobiliorem Cereali illa frugem ex civitate mea gentibus importare; restitutum nempe civilem liberumque vitæ cultum, per urbes, per regna, perque nationes disseminare," &c.

"I seem to survey, as from a towering height, the far-extended tracts of sea and land, and innumerable crowds of spectators, betraying in their looks the liveliest interest, and sensations the most congenial with my own: here I behold the stout and manly prowess of the German, disdaining servitude; there the generous and lively impetuosity of the French; on this side the calm and stately valour of the Spaniard; on that the composed and wary magnanimity of the Italian. Of all the lovers of liberty and virtue, the magnanimous and the wise, in whatever quarter they may be found, some secretly favour, others openly approve; some greet me with congratulations and applause; others, who had long been proof against conviction, at last yield themselves captive to the force of truth. Surrounded by congregated multitudes, I now imagine, that, from the columns of Hercules to the Indian ocean, I behold the nations of the earth recovering that liberty which they so long had lost; and that the people of this island are transporting to other countries a plant of more beneficial qualities, and more noble growth, than that which Triptolemus is reported to have carried from region to region; that they are disseminating the blessings of civilization and freedom among cities, kingdoms, and nations. Nor shall I approach unknown, *nor perhaps unloved*, if it be told that I am the same person, who engaged in single combat that fierce advocate of despotism, till then reputed invincible in the opinion of many, and in his own conceit, who insolently challenged us and our armies to the combat; but whom, while I repelled his virulence, I silenced with his own weapons; and over whom, if I may trust to the opinion of impartial judges, I gained a complete and glorious victory."

In 1659 Milton published his "Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes, showing that it is not lawful for any Power on earth to compel in matters of religion."

The same year he published "Considerations touching the likeliest means to remove Hirelings out of the Church; wherein is also discoursed of Tithes, Church-fees, and Church-revenues; and whether any Maintenance of Ministers can be settled by law."

He wrote also a "Letter to a Friend concerning the Ruptures of the Commonwealth;" and "The Present Means and Brief Delineation of a Free Commonwealth, easy to be put in practice, and without delay; in a Letter to General Monk."

In 1660 he published "The ready and easy way to establish a free Commonwealth, and the excellence thereof compared with the inconveniences and dangers of re-admitting Kingship in the realm."

In the same year he published "Brief Notes upon a late Sermon, titled the 'Fear of God,' preached and since published by Matthew Griffith, D. D., and Chaplain to the late King, wherein many notorious wrestings of Scripture, and other falsities, are observed."

* The author of this book was Peter de Moulin, afterwards Prebendary of Canterbury. See an "Account of Alexander Morus," among the Literati of Geneva, where he published many books. See Senebier's "Histoire Littéraire."

I cannot help lamenting that Milton spent so many years in these bitter political and sectarian squabbles: "coarser minds" would have done for that work. He was always powerful—sometimes splendid; but here his passions were human, and too often mingled with earthly dross. That magnificent and stupendous imagination must have often slept: his faculties duly employed might have produced other epic poems equal to "Paradise Lost;" he might even have gained something more of facility and softness: other gardens of Eden might have been described, and human passions of half-etherial sublimity might have been embodied: his youthful purpose of some romantic tale of chivalry might also have been executed.

Perhaps he would never have attained to the rich profusion of Spenser; but he would have been far more nervous, gigantic, and heaven-exalted in his characters and descriptions: he would have painted castles and battles and enchantments with a darker, more awful, and more prophet-like power: he would have given, by a few mighty strokes, what Spenser somewhat weakens by the expanded multiplicity of his touches. With the collected sternness of Dante, and the gloomy touches of his inspired vein, he would have filled the imagination with something of super-human exaltation of visionary grandeur.

What themes for a creative mind did the superstitions, manners, and traditionary tales of chivalry offer! Milton's memory was stored with this branch of literature, and delighted in it; and his faculty of sublime fiction could have added to it any ornaments he chose: but mighty as was his imagery, the spiritual part of his power was still mightier: magnificence of thought and sentiment is his prime characteristic. It is his force of reflection and comment, which overcomes and electrifies us; the vast extent of his views; his comprehension, and stupendous grasp: and, while he speaks as a poet, he speaks also as a sage, and a philosopher.

How would he have described the Crusades, above all other poets! what endless diversity of scenery, heroism, customs, incidents, moral and intellectual character; observation, learning, opinion, reasoning, principles, would he have supplied! This would have been far superior to the story of "King Arthur," in which, perhaps, there is some mixture of childishness, unbecoming the lofty bard's austere grandeur.

While Milton's mind was immersed for twenty years in all those mean contests of human ambition or bigotry, in which intrigue, artifice, and selfish passions pervert and darken the heart and the head, he must have stifled those radiant visions of spiritual purity, which were his natural food and delight. A suppressed fire often turns to poison; and perhaps it gave some embitterment to the poet's feelings: but the fire now and then blazed unexpectedly in a glorious flame amid endless pages of subtle or heavy prose.

Perhaps he would not have lost his eyesight, if he had pored less over these controversial mysteries, dry as the dust of the barren desert. The dreams of imagination give rest to the eyes, and are brightest when the outward view is closed.

The vexatious humours with which the poet had to contend must have added to the irritable temperament of his frame. He was naturally "a choleric man," according to the report of Mrs. Powell, the mother of his first wife; and he had a scorn of mean intellects and unlearned persons. Loftiness was a prime ingredient in his disposition, as well as in his mental faculties: detraction and contumely enraged him: his opinions were strong and fixed—he would bend to no man. As he never deviated from the paths of duty he had chalked out, so opposition embittered his temper, or excited his scorn: he was not one, therefore, who could buffet in troubled waters without a great wear of his frame. He himself says, that he lost his sight "overplied in liberty's defence." This was, no doubt, true:—the sour humours of the body might, by a natural effect, disease the eyes: they were tender even in his youth.

The cause of liberty, pursued from the purest motives, if it could be separated from the constant participation of the great body who were actuated by a love of licentiousness, and an envious desire to overturn and plunder the great and the rich, would become such a mind as Milton's: but the large mass of the active movers of that celebrated contest was of a temper, and passion, and principle utterly unfitted to the bard's holy spirit. He was blinded by his zeal in a cause in which his heart and his convictions were embarked, and he reaped the fruit of the food he sought in bitterness and sorrow: he found thorns and brambles and weeds, without end, wherever he applied his sickle.

Opinions differ concerning the character of the sovereign, against whom he lifted his voice and his hand. That unhappy monarch was so placed by birth and circumstances, that perhaps the wisest man and the greatest hero could not have escaped safe, much less victorious. He had some weaknesses, of which a leading one was ductility: he was a man of elegant taste, numerous accomplishments, varied learning, with a sensitive, generous heart, and undoubted piety: he entertained some notions of kingly power, which in these days would be generally condemned; but in the times in which he imbibed and persevered in them, it would have been truly extraordinary if he had thought otherwise. The most plausible charge laid against his character is insincerity: this arose from want of firmness. He was sometimes led into momentary concessions contrary to his conviction.

The trust he put in Buckingham cannot be entirely excused, because that minister was deficient in almost every quality necessary to a statesman: his want of high talents, his profligacy, his profusion, his deficiency in all the grand principles of a sound government, his corruption, his reckless indiscretions, offered a mark for the revolutionary passions of the age, which they could not miss. But the system of favouritism was then the general fault of monarchs; and Charles had a warm and friendly heart, which could not easily give up an attachment. On the contrary, the unfortunate prince has been blamed for sacrificing Strafford: for that afflicting charge nothing less than extreme *duresse* can be an excuse.

When once the sword of civil contest is drawn, neither party thinks itself safe till it has destroyed the other; this is the excuse the parliamentarians plead for putting Charles to death. I shall never cease to consider it a bloodthirsty and unpardonable act. All my veneration for Milton, and all the power of argument of his mighty mind, will not alter that opinion.

The opposition to the rule of kings had been secretly brooding and fomenting through Europe for near a century, but had been kept down in England by the magnanimous and prudent spirit of Queen Elizabeth: but the Puritans had been constantly at work against her throne, while the Jesuits beset it on other principles, and with other views. At Milton's birth, the imbecility of King James had encouraged that spirit in the former growing sect, which struck at the root of all ancient institutions. Milton probably drank in these schisms with his earliest breath; but for a time his classical and romantic studies, the glories of his poetical imagination, his neighbourhood to the feudal hospitalities of Harefield, the smiles of Spenser's patroness, the noble and splendid pageantry of Ludlow Castle, and his travels among the seats of the ancient arts, the heroic fablings of Tasso, and the glowing recollections of the Marquis Manso in the Elysian scenery of the sunny bay of Naples, suspended, and nearly expelled them.

But when the discordant trumpet of open civil strife was once sounded, and by an unhappy spell excited all the early predilections which had been instilled into his childhood, the Muse, for whom nature had best fitted him, was for a long time forgotten; and all the crabbed lore of puritanical gloom overshadowed the native fire of a heavenly imagination.

In whatever turn his mind took, he had power and force to go beyond other men. When his gigantic strength entered the field of battle, like Samson, he would lay all prostrate before him; and like him, rather than submit and give triumph to his foes, would have grasped the columns, and brought the tumbling roof of the theatre* on the heads of all; willing to fall himself in the common ruin, rather than let the proud and the mighty prevail over him. Here lay his ambition; here he had something of the spirit of his Fallen Angels. To him all monarchs of the ordinary vigour of human intellect appeared but as children of the dust: in the conscious vastness of his intellectual supremacy, he met them, when they put on the armour of assault, with scorn and defiance.

* "The building was a spacious theatre,
Half-round,—on two main pillars vaulted high."
AGON. l. 1607, seq.

CHAPTER XII.

MILTON'S CONTROVERSIAL WRITINGS.

On March 15, 1648-9, the council of state appointed Milton secretary for the foreign tongues. In 1652 the poet's eyesight was entirely lost; but he was still continued in his office, and allowed an assistant, Mr. Philip Meadowes. About this time his first wife died, leaving him three daughters. He did not re-marry till 1656. This second wife was daughter of Captain Woodcock of Hackney: she died in childbed the next year, and was buried at St. Margaret's Westminster, 10th February, 1657.

On April 17, 1655, it was ordered that "the former salary of Mr. John Milton of two hundred eighty-eight pounds, &c., formerly charged on the council's contingencies, be reduced to one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, and paid to him during his life out of his Highnesse's exchequer."

Bishop Sumner says, it is presumed that from this time Milton ceased to be employed in public affairs; but Todd gives proof that he continued to be employed long afterwards, first with the aid of Philip Meadowes, and afterwards, in 1657, of Andrew Marvell, the poet, whose noble panegyrical verses are prefixed to the "Paradise Lost."*

As late as the 25th of October, 1659, there is a warrant of state for the payment to John Milton and Andrew Marvell of 86*l.* 12*s.* each, at the rate for each of 200*l.* per annum.

A little before the king's coming over, Milton was sequestered from his Latin secretaryship, and the salary.

In 1658 he amused himself by editing from a MS. "the Cabinet Council of Ralegh."

Whatever merit Milton might have in the able and learned discharge of his political services, it is deeply to be lamented that his brilliant and sublime faculties were so employed. He had a mind too creative to be wasted in writing down official despatches, or turning them into classical Latin: humble talents would have done better for such laborious and technical tasks. How the slumbering fire of his rich and ever-varying fictions must have consumed his heart and his brain!

How he must have fretted at the base intrigues of courts and councils, and the turpitude of human ambition!—While immured within dark and close official walls, how he must have sighed and pined to be courting his splendid visions, of a higher and more congenial world, on the banks of some haunted stream!—The woods and forests, the mountains, seas, and lakes, ought to have been his dwelling-places.—The whispers of the spring, or the roaring of the winter-winds, ought to have soothed or excited his spirits.—In those regions aërial beings visit the earth; there the soul sees what the concourse of mankind puts to flight; there the mean passions, that corrupt the human bosom, have no abode.

To make a man of business requires nothing but petty and watchful observation, cold reserve and selfish craft: to catch the moment when caution in others is asleep; to raise hopes, yet promise nothing; to seem to give full information, yet to be so vague, that everything is open to escape. How can the poet practise such arts as these? He is lost in himself; he is wrapped up in his own creations.

Milton has left interspersed in his controversial writings fragments of autobiography which have every sort of value. They are full of facts;—are vigorous, wise, eloquent, and sublime.

They are also proofs of that enthusiasm of character, which led the poet to those ideal views of liberty that are inconsistent with human frailty.

Of such passages the first, and perhaps most interesting, is the writer's description of his own person:—

"I do not believe," says the poet, "that I was ever once noted for deformity, by any one who ever saw me; but the praise of beauty I am not anxious to obtain. My stature certainly is not tall; but it rather approaches the middle than the diminutive. Yet what if it were diminutive, when so many men, illustrious both in peace and war, have been the same? And how can that be called diminutive,

* A curious letter of Milton's to Lord President Bradshaw, as early as 1653, recommending Marvell as an assistant, is given by Todd, then lately discovered in the State Paper Office.

which is great enough for every virtuous achievement? Nor, though very thin, was I ever deficient in courage or in strength; and I was wont constantly to exercise myself in the use of the sword, as long as it comported with my habits and my years. Armed with this weapon, as I usually was, I should have thought myself quite a match for any one, though much stronger than myself; and I felt perfectly secure against the assault of any open enemy. At this moment I have the same courage, the same strength, though not the same eyes: yet so little do they betray any external appearance of injury, that they are as unclouded and bright as the eyes of those who most distinctly see. In this instance alone I am a dissembler against my will. My face, which is said to indicate a total privation of blood, is of a complexion entirely opposite to the pale and the cadaverous; so that, though I am more than forty years old, there is scarcely any one to whom I do not appear ten years younger than I am; and the smoothness of my skin is not, in the least, affected by the wrinkles of age."

His adversary had maliciously and daringly accused him of looseness of life and conversation. To this Milton indignantly thus replies:—"But because as well by this upbraiding to me the bordelloes, as by other suspicious glancings in his book, he would seem privily to point me out to his readers, as one whose custom of life was not honest but licentious; I shall entreat to be borne with, though I digress; and in a way not often trod, acquaint ye with the sum of my thoughts in this matter, through the course of my years and studies; although I am not ignorant how hazardous it will be to do this under the nose of the envious, as it were in skirmish to change the compact order, and instead of outward actions to bring inmost thoughts into front. And I must tell ye, readers, that by this sort of men I have been already bitten at; yet shall they not for me know how slightly they are esteemed, unless they have so much learning as to read what in Greek ἀπειροκαλία is, which, together with envy, is the common disease of those who censure books that are not for their reading. With me it fares now, as with him whose outward garment hath been injured and ill-bedighted; for having no other shift, what help but to turn the inside outwards, especially if the lining be of the same, or, as it is sometimes, much better? So if my name and outward demeanour be not evident enough to defend me, I must make trial if the discovery of my inmost thoughts can: wherein of two purposes both honest, and both sincere, the one perhaps I shall not miss: although I fail to gain belief with others, of being such as my perpetual thoughts shall here disclose me, I may yet not fail of success in persuading some to be such really themselves, as they cannot believe me to be more than what I feign. I had my time, readers, as others have, who have good learning bestowed upon them, to be sent to those places, where the opinion was, it might be soonest attained; and as the manner is, was not unstudied in those authors which are most commended; whereof some were grave orators and historians, whose matter methought I loved indeed, but as my age then was, so I understood them; others were the smooth elegiac poets, whereof the schools are not scarce, whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous writing, which in imitation I found most easy, and most agreeable to nature's part in me, and for their matter, which what it is, there be few who know not, I was so allured to read, that no recreation came to me better welcome: for that it was then those years with me which are excused, though they be least severe, I may be saved the labour to remember ye. Whence having observed them to account it the chief glory of their wit, in that they were ablest to judge, to praise, and by that could esteem themselves worthiest to love those high perfections, which under one or other name they took to celebrate; I thought with myself by every instinct and presage of nature, which is not wont to be false, that what emboldened them to this task, might with such diligence as they used embolden me; and that what judgment, wit, or elegance, was my share, would herein best appear, and best value itself, by how much more wisely, and with more love of virtue I should choose (let rude ears be absent) the object of not unlike praises: for albeit these thoughts to some will seem virtuous and commendable, to others only pardonable, to a third sort perhaps idle; yet the mentioning of them now will end in serious. Nor blame it, readers, in those years to propose to themselves such a reward, as the noblest dispositions above other things in this life have sometimes preferred: whereof not to be sensible when good and fair in one person meet, argues both a gross and shallow judgment, and

withal an ungentle, and swainish breast: for by the firm settling of these persuasions, I became, to my best memory, so much a proficient, that if I found those authors any where speaking unworthy things of themselves, or unchaste of those names which before they had extolled; this effect it wrought with me, from that time forward their art I still applauded, but the men I deplored: and above them all, preferred the two famous renowners of Beatrice and Laura, who never write but honour of them to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts without transgression. And long it was not after when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy. These reasonings, together with a certain niceness of nature, an honest haughtiness, and self-esteem either of what I was, or what I might be (which let envy call pride), and lastly that modesty, whereof though not in the title page, yet here I may be excused to make some beseeming profession; all these uniting the supply of their natural aid together, kept me still above those low descents of mind, beneath which he must deject and plunge himself, that can agree to salable and unlawful prostitutions Next (for hear me out now, readers), that I may tell ye whither my younger feet wandered; I betook me among those lofty fables and romances, which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renown over all Christendom. There I read it in the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of his best blood, or of his life, if it so befel him, the honour and chastity of virgin or matron; from whence even then I learned what a noble virtue chastity sure must be, to the defence of which so many worthies, by such a dear adventure of themselves, had sworn; and if I found in the story afterward, any of them, by word or deed, breaking that oath, I judged it the same fault of the poet, as that which is attributed to Homer, to have written indecent things of the gods: only this my mind gave me, that every free and gentle spirit, without that oath, ought to be born a knight, nor needed to expect the gilt spur, or the laying of a sword upon his shoulder, to stir him up, both by his counsel and his arms, to secure and protect the weakness of any attempted chastity. So that even these books, which to many others have been the fuel of wantonness and loose living, I cannot think how, unless by divine indulgence, proved to me so many incitements, as you have heard, to the love and stedfast observation of that virtue which abhors the society of bordelloes. Thus, from the laureat fraternity of poets, riper years and the ceaseless round of study and reading led me to the shady spaces of philosophy; but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato, and his equal Xenophon: where, if I should tell ye what I learned of chastity and love, I mean that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only virtue, which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy (the rest are cheated with a thick intoxicating potion, which a certain sorceress, the abuser of love's name, carries about); and how the first and chiefest office of love begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, knowledge and virtue—with such abstracted sublimities as these; it might be worth your listening, readers; as I may one day hope to have ye in a still time, when there shall be no chiding; not in these noises."

CHAPTER XIII.

MILTON'S CHARACTER OF CROMWELL.

This character is of the utmost importance, because it will show us what the great republican thought of the Protector's services, and what he expected from him.

"Oliver Cromwell was sprung from a line of illustrious ancestors, who were distinguished for the civil functions which they sustained under the monarchy, and still more for the part which they took in restoring and establishing true religion in this country. In the vigour and maturity of his life, which he passed in retirement, he was conspicuous for nothing more than for the strictness of his religious habits

and the innocence of his manners; and he had tacitly cherished in his breast that flame of piety which was afterwards to stand him in so much stead on the greatest occasions, and in the most critical exigencies. In the last parliament which was called by the king, he was elected to represent his native town; when he soon became distinguished by the justness of his opinions, and the vigour and decision of his counsels. When the sword was drawn, he offered his services, and was appointed to a troop of horse, whose numbers were soon increased by the pious and the good, who flocked from all quarters to his standard; and in a short time he almost surpassed the greatest generals in the magnitude and the rapidity of his achievements. Nor is this surprising; for he was a soldier disciplined to perfection in the knowledge of himself: he had either extinguished, or by habit had learned to subdue, the whole host of vain hopes, fears, and passions, which infest the soul. He first acquired the government of himself, and over himself acquired the most signal victories; so that on the first day he took the field against the external enemy, he was a veteran in arms, consummately practised in the toils and exigencies of war. It is not possible for me, in the narrow limits in which I circumscribe myself on this occasion, to enumerate the many towns which he has taken, the many battles which he has won. The whole surface of the British empire has been the scene of his exploits, and the theatre of his triumphs; which alone would furnish ample materials for a history, and want a copiousness of narration not inferior to the magnitude and diversity of the transactions. This alone seems to be a sufficient proof of his extraordinary and almost supernatural virtue, that by the vigour of his genius, or the excellence of his discipline, adapted not more to the necessities of war than to the precepts of Christianity, the good and the brave were from all quarters attracted to his camp, not only as to the best school of military talents, but of piety and virtue; and that during the whole war, and the occasional intervals of peace, amid so many vicissitudes of faction and of events, he retained and still retains the obedience of his troops, not by largesses or indulgence, but by his sole authority, and the regularity of his pay. In this instance his fame may rival that of Cyrus, of Epaminondas, or any of the great generals of antiquity. Hence he collected an army as numerous and as well equipped as any one ever did in so short a time; which was uniformly obedient to his orders, and dear to the affections of the citizens; which was formidable to the enemy in the field, but never cruel to those who laid down their arms; which committed no lawless ravages on the persons or the property of the inhabitants; who, when they compared their conduct with the turbulence, the intemperance, the impiety, and the debauchery of the royalists, were wont to salute them as friends, and to consider them as guests. They were a stay to the good, a terror to the evil, and the warmest advocates for every exertion of piety and virtue. Nor would it be right to pass over the name of Fairfax, who united the utmost fortitude with the utmost courage; and the spotless innocence of whose life seemed to point him out as the peculiar favourite of Heaven. Justly indeed may you be excited to receive this wreath of praise; though you have retired as much as possible from the world, and seek those shades of privacy which were the delight of Scipio. Nor was it only the enemy whom you subdued; but you have triumphed over that flame of ambition and that lust of glory, which are wont to make the best and the greatest of men their slaves. The purity of your virtues and the splendour of your actions consecrate those sweets of ease which you enjoy, and which constitute the wished-for haven of the toils of man. Such was the ease which, when the heroes of antiquity possessed, after a life of exertion and glory not greater than yours, the poets, in despair of finding ideas or expressions better suited to the subject, feigned that they were received into heaven, and invited to recline at the tables of the gods. But whether it were your health, which I principally believe, or any other motive which caused you to retire, of this I am convinced; that nothing could have induced you to relinquish the service of your country, if you had not known that in your successor liberty would meet with a protector, and England with a stay to its safety, and a pillar to its glory: for, while you, O Cromwell, are left among us, he hardly shows a proper confidence in the Supreme, who distrusts the security of England; when he sees that you are in so special a manner the favoured object of the divine regard. But there was another department of the war, which was destined for your exclusive exertions.

"Without entering into any length of detail, I will, if possible, describe some of the most memorable actions with as much brevity as you performed them with celerity. After the loss of all Ireland, with the exception of one city, you in one battle immediately discomfited the forces of the rebels; and were busily employed in settling the country, when you were suddenly recalled to the war in Scotland. Hence you proceeded with unwearied diligence against the Scots, who were on the point of making an irruption into England with the king in their train; and in about the space of one year, you entirely subdued, and added to the English dominion, that kingdom, which all our monarchs, during a period of eight hundred years, had in vain struggled to subject. In one battle you almost annihilated the remainder of their forces, who, in a fit of desperation, had made a sudden incursion into England, then almost destitute of garrisons, and got as far as Worcester; where you came up with them by forced marches, and captured almost the whole of their nobility. A profound peace ensued; when we found, though indeed not then for the first time, that you were as wise in the cabinet as valuable in the field. It was your constant endeavour in the senate either to induce them to adhere to those treaties which they had entered into with the enemy, or speedily to adjust others which promised to be beneficial to the country. But when you saw that the business was artfully procrastinated, that every one was more intent on his own selfish interest than on the public good, that the people complained of the disappointments which they had experienced, and the fallacious promises by which they had been gulled, that they were the dupes of a few overbearing individuals, you put an end to their domination. A new parliament is summoned; and the right of election given to those to whom it was expedient: they meet; but do nothing; and after having wearied themselves by their mutual dissensions, and fully exposed their incapacity to the observation of the country, they consent to a voluntary dissolution. In this state of desolation, to which we were reduced, you, O Cromwell! alone remained to conduct the government, and to save the country. We all willingly yield the palm of sovereignty to your unrivalled ability and virtue, except the few among us, who either ambitious of honours which they have not the capacity to sustain, or who envy those which are conferred on one more worthy than themselves, or else who do not know that nothing in the world is more pleasing to God, more agreeable to reason, more politically just or more generally useful, than that the supreme power should be vested in the best and the wisest of men. Such, O Cromwell, all acknowledge you to be; such are the services which you have rendered, as the leader of our councils, the general of our armies, and the father of your country; for this is the tender appellation by which all the good among us salute you from the very soul. Other names you neither have nor could endure; and you deservedly reject that pomp of title which attracts the gaze and admiration of the multitude: for what is a title but a certain definite mode of dignity? but actions such as yours surpass, not only the bounds of our admiration, but our titles; and like the points of pyramids, which are lost in the clouds, they soar above the possibilities of titular commendation. But since, though it be not fit, it may be expedient, that the highest pitch of virtue should be circumscribed within the bounds of some human appellation, you endured to receive, for the public good, a title most like to that of the father of your country; not to exalt, but rather to bring you nearer to the level of ordinary men; the title of King was unworthy the transcendent majesty of your character; for if you had been captivated by a name, over which, as a private man, you had so completely triumphed and crumbled into dust, you would have been doing the same thing as if, after having subdued some idolatrous nation by the help of the true God, you should afterwards fall down and worship the gods which you had vanquished. Do you then, sir, continue your course with the same unrivalled magnanimity; it sits well upon you;—to you our country owes its liberties; nor can you sustain a character at once more momentous and more august than that of the author, the guardian, and the preserver of our liberties; and hence you have not only eclipsed the achievements of all our Kings, but even those which have been fabled of our heroes. Often reflect what a dear pledge the beloved land of your nativity has entrusted to your care; and that liberty which she once expected only from the chosen flower of her talents and her virtues, she now expects from you only, and by you only hopes to obtain. Revere the fond expectations which we cherish, the solicitude of your anxious

country; revere the looks and wounds of your brave companions in arms, who, under your banners, have so strenuously fought for liberty; revere the shades of those who perished in the contest; revere also the opinions and the hopes which foreign states entertain concerning us, who promise to themselves so many advantages from that liberty, which we have so bravely acquired, from the establishment of that new government, which has begun to shed its splendour on the world, which, if it be suffered to vanish like a dream, would involve us in the deepest abyss of shame; and lastly, revere yourself; and, after having endured so many sufferings and encountered so many perils for the sake of liberty, do not suffer it, now it is obtained, either to be violated by yourself, or in any one instance impaired by others.

"You cannot be truly free unless we are free too; for such is the nature of things, that he who entrenches on the liberty of others, is the first to lose his own, and become a slave. But, if you, who have hitherto been the patron and tutelary genius of liberty; if you, who are exceeded by no one in justice, in piety, and goodness, should hereafter invade that liberty which you have defended, your conduct must be fatally operative, not only against the cause of liberty, but the general interests of piety and virtue. Your integrity and virtue will appear to have evaporated, your faith in religion to have been small; your character with posterity will dwindle into insignificance, by which a most destructive blow will be levelled against the happiness of mankind. The work which you have undertaken is of incalculable moment, which will thoroughly sift and expose every principle and sensation of your heart, which will fully display the vigour and genius of your character, which will evince whether you really possess those great qualities of piety, fidelity, justice, and self-denial, which made us believe that you were elevated by the special direction of the Deity to the highest pinnacle of power. At once wisely and discreetly to hold the sceptre over three powerful nations, to persuade people to relinquish inveterate and corrupt for new and more beneficial maxims and institutions, to penetrate into the remotest parts of the country, to have the mind present and operative in every quarter, to watch against surprise, to provide against danger, to reject the blandishments of pleasure and the pomp of power;—these are exertions compared with which the labour of war is a mere pastime; which will require every energy and employ every faculty that you possess; which demand a man supported from above, and almost instructed by immediate inspiration."

I add to this some important queries, applicable to all times, addressed by the great politician to the people themselves. They will be read at this time with the deepest interest:—

"For who would vindicate your right of unrestrained suffrage, or of choosing what representatives you liked best, merely that you might elect the creatures of your own faction, whoever they might be, or him, however small might be his worth, who would give you the most lavish feasts, and enable you to drink to the greatest excess! Thus not wisdom and authority, but turbulence and gluttony, would soon exalt the vilest miscreants from our taverns and our brothels, from our towns and villages, to the rank and dignity of senators. For, should the management of the republic be entrusted to persons to whom no one would willingly entrust the management of his private concerns? and the treasury of the state be left to the care of those who had lavished their own fortunes in an infamous prodigality? Should they have the charge of the public purse, which they would soon convert into a private, by their unprincipled peculations? Are they fit to be the legislators of a whole people who themselves know not what law, what reason, what right and wrong, what crooked and straight, what licit and illicit means? who think that all power consists in outrage, all dignity in the parade of insolence? who neglect every other consideration for the corrupt gratification of their friendships, or the prosecution of their resentments? who disperse their own relations and creatures through the provinces, for the sake of levying taxes and confiscating goods; men, for the greater part, the most profligate and vile, who buy up for themselves what they pretend to expose to sale, who thence collect an exorbitant mass of wealth, which they fraudulently divert from the public service; who thus spread their pillage through the country, and in a moment emerge from penury and rags, to a state of splendour and of wealth! Who could endure such thievish servants, such vicegerents of their lords?

Who could believe that the masters and the patrons of a banditti could be the proper guardians of liberty? or who would suppose that he should ever be made one hair more free by such a set of public functionaries (though they might amount to five hundred elected in this manner from the counties and boroughs), when among them who are the very guardians of liberty, and to whose custody it is committed, there must be so many, who know not either how to use or to enjoy liberty, who neither understand the principles nor merit the possession?"

I now resume my remarks upon the poet's genius and acquirements.

Milton's knowledge of human nature was confined to general traits: he had not detected the minute foldings and smaller particularities, nor opened those secret movements of the passions which familiarise us with private life. All was drawn with the enlarged eye of his own magnificent mind. In this respect he was utterly dissimilar to Shakspeare: he had none of the dramatist's playfulness and flexibility. Milton was always Milton, as Byron was always Byron: neither of them could transport himself into other characters. He spoke of others as an observer; not as identified with them. It appears to me, that this individuality will be found to go through all Milton's writings, and all the conduct of his life: he lived among a world of inferior beings, to whom his stern sublimity could not conform. This showed itself in the very outset of his career,—at college,—where he rebelled against academical discipline; and to this in a great degree may be attributed the vehement and relentless part he took against royalty, and also his separation from the sect with whom he commenced his warfare against the throne.

Villemain, in his life of the poet in the "Biographie Universelle," notices this inflexibility, and the unfitness for practical commerce with the world which it caused.

Yet hence arose many of the grand thoughts and gigantic images that adorned and exalted his poetry: thus he never fell beneath his lofty sphere. Such is the view I take of him in his private character: my business is not to repeat what I find in other books, but to examine for myself. I do not undertake to bring together all which has been said already; on the contrary, much which has been said before seems to me to be on that account not necessary to be said again: I do not desire to supersede other biographers, but rather wish to be admitted among them. I have the hope of saying something which is not to be found elsewhere, and such as will gain the assent of others at least for its probability; for I scorn to seek for novelty at the expense of truth.

All the facts of Milton's life have been laboriously searched for, and brought forward already: opinions upon them are not yet exhausted: unfortunately too many biographers copy each other in this portion of their task: they are either incapable of thinking for themselves, or they do not venture it: they scarcely even vary the expressions. The effect of this is nausea to the purchaser of such books: the "decies repetita" is always repulsive. Perhaps it will be answered, that what had been before observed was just, and therefore required no alteration: if so, the public did not want the renewal of that of which it was in possession.

Johnson is a critic who has always been a favourite with English readers: his piquancy and severity please; but these, when applied to Milton, are by persons of imagination or taste read with distaste from their perverse and wilful malignity. They often show the vigour of the critic's intellect and the ingenuity of his pointed language, but they are false or exaggerated in decision, and irreverent and harsh in language. The splendour of Milton's genius ought to have kept aloof such pedantic petulance. If such faults could have been justly imputed to him, still the author of "Paradise Lost" should have been approached with awe, and commented on with the most decorous and profound respect. What right had Johnson to attack and blacken the poet's moral character by imputing motives of passion and ill-humour to him, which he has himself in the most positive and solemn manner denied? He saw the abuses of the existing government, he deluded himself with the hope that by a grand change his own ideal views of perfection might be accomplished. If we believe him,—and he must have a most ungenerous and corrupt mind who can doubt,—his heart was the seat of all earthly integrity, and exalted by the most purified and spiritual aspirations. Of all mean passions, envy could least enter a bosom which had so lofty and calm a confidence in the superiority of its own intellectual gifts: no man envies what he scorns and estimates at nothing.

CHAPTER XIV.

MILTON'S BLINDNESS, AND OCCUPATIONS AFTER THE RESTORATION.

MILTON'S enemies had had the baseness to charge his blindness as a judment upon him: he repels this charge with a just indignation, at the opening of his "Second Defence for the People of England."

"I wish," commences this magnificent passage, "that I could with equal facility refute what this barbarous opponent has said of my blindness; but I cannot do it, and I must submit to the affliction. It is not so wretched to be blind, as it is not to be capable of enduring blindness. But why should I not endure a misfortune, which it behoves every one to be prepared to endure if it should happen; which may, in the common course of things, happen to any man, and which has been known to have happened to the most distinguished and virtuous persons in history? What is reported of the Augur Tiresias is well known; of whom Apollonius sung thus in his 'Argonautics'—

> To men he dared the will divine disclose,
> Nor fear'd what Jove might in his wrath impose.
> The gods assign'd him age without decay,
> But snatch'd the blessing of his sight away.

But God Himself is truth; in propagating which, as men display a greater integrity and zeal, they approach nearer to the similitude of God, and possess a greater portion of his love. We cannot suppose the Deity envious of truth, or unwilling that it should be freely communicated to mankind: the loss of sight, therefore, which this inspired sage, who was so eager in promoting knowledge among men, sustained, cannot be considered as a judicial punishment: and did not our Saviour himself declare that that poor man whom he had restored to sight had not been born blind, either on account of his own sins, or those of his progenitors?

"And with respect to myself, though I have accurately examined my conduct, and scrutinised my soul, I call thee, O God, the searcher of hearts, to witness, that I am not conscious, either in the more early or in the later periods of my life, of having committed any enormity which might deservedly have marked me out as a fit object for such a calamitous visitation: but since my enemies boast that this affliction is only a retribution for the transgressions of my pen, I again invoke the Almighty to witness that I never at any time wrote anything which I did not think agreeable to truth, to justice, and to piety. This was my persuasion then, and I feel the same persuasion now. Thus, therefore, when I was publicly solicited to write a reply to the defence of the royal cause, when I had to contend with the pressure of sickness, and with the apprehension of soon losing the sight of my remaining eye, and when my medical attendants clearly announced, that if I did engage in this work it would be irreparably lost, their premonitions caused no hesitation and inspired no dismay; I would not have listened to the voice even of Esculapius himself from the shrine of Epidaurus, in preference to the suggestions of the heavenly monitor within my breast: my resolution was unshaken, though the alternative was either the loss of my sight or the desertion of my duty; and I called to mind those two destinies which the oracle of Delphi announced to the son of Thetis.

"I considered that many had purchased a less good by a greater evil, the meed of glory by the loss of life; but that I might procure great good by little suffering; that, though I am blind, I might still discharge the most honourable duties, the performance of which, as it is something more durable than glory, ought to be an object of superior admiration and esteem; I resolved, therefore, to make the short interval of sight which was left me to enjoy as beneficial as possible to the public interest.

"But, if the choice were necessary, I would, sir, prefer my blindness to yours; yours is a cloud spread over the mind, which darkens both the light of reason and of conscience; mine keeps from my view only the coloured surfaces of things, while it leaves me at liberty to contemplate the beauty and stability of virtue and of truth. How many things are there besides which I would not willingly see; how many which I must see against my will; and how few which I feel any anxiety to see! There is, as the Apostle has remarked, a way to strength through weakness.

Let me then be the most feeble creature alive, as long as that feebleness serves to invigorate the energies of my rational and immortal spirit; as long as in that obscurity in which I am enveloped, the light of the divine presence more clearly shines! And, indeed, in my blindness, I enjoy in no inconsiderable degree the favour of the Deity; who regards me with more tenderness and compassion in proportion as I am able to behold nothing but Himself. Alas! for him who insults me, who maligns and merits public execration! For the Divine law not only shields me from injury, but almost renders me too sacred to attack; not indeed so much from the privation of my sight, as from the overshadowing of those heavenly wings, which seem to have occasioned this obscurity. To this I ascribe the more tender assiduities of my friends, their soothing attentions, their kind visits, their reverential observances."

Every one is familiar with the poet's twenty-second sonnet on this subject.

Cyriac, this three-years-day these eyes, though clear,—
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot——
What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In liberty's defence, my noble task.

One is a little surprised that he could so long endure this laborious and tedious office of secretary, especially after his sight began to fail him. His nephew, Edward Philips, for some time assisted him.

In 1652 he entirely lost his sight.

Todd has recovered a curious letter of Milton from the State-Paper Office, recommending his friend Andrew Marvell, the poet, for some employment:—"A gentleman, whose name is Mr. Marvell,—a man, both by report and the converse I have had with him, of singular desert for the state to make use of; who also offers himself, if there be any employment for him. His father was the minister of Hull, and he hath spent four years abroad in Holland, France, Italy, and Spain, to very good purpose, as I believe, and the gaining of these four languages;—besides he is a scholar, and well read in the Latin and Greek authors; and no doubt, of an approved conversation; for he comes now lately out of the house of the Lord Fairfax, who was general, where he was entrusted to give some instructions in the languages to the lady, his daughter."

This letter of Milton was written in 1653: but Marvell was not joined to Milton in the office of Latin secretary, till 1657. Marvell's commendatory poem on the "Paradise Lost," is well known:—

When I beheld the poet blind, yet bold,
In slender book his vast design unfold; &c.

Milton's salary as Latin secretary was £288 18*s*. 6*d*. a year. In 1659, he was only paid at the rate of £200 a year, having then retired.

In this retirement, about two years before the Restoration, he began the "Paradise Lost." Though retired, he was visited by all foreigners of distinction, and some persons of rank at home; but he was known and admired more for his political services than for his poetry.

He had, as has been mentioned, done little in poetry for the last twenty years, except his few sonnets: of these, Johnson speaks with a tasteless and unworthy contempt: that they are rich in thought, sentiment, and naked sublimity of language, is now undisputed.

It appears that Milton yet relaxed nothing of his mental activity. After the death of Cromwell he must have seen the incumbent danger of that republican form of government, which he had spent so much zeal and such gigantic talents to establish. Not only his head but his heart was involved in this establishment. He had worked himself to a fury against kings, and what he supposed to be the tyranny inseparable from their power. His ambition does not appear to have been in the least degree selfish;—he had no views of personal aggrandisement: he did not look to riches or political honours: he had no familiarity with those who were called the great: even with Cromwell, his idol, he seems to have had no individual intimacy. Lawrence, "of virtuous father virtuous son," and Cyriac Skinner, were his chief friends. Of the former he says,—

Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining?——

He, who of those delights can judge, and spare,
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

Even the genius of Milton could not have made the progress he did either in production or in learning, if he had admitted the frequent distractions of society. The history of his day is given by the biographers;—but it will not account for the immensity of his reading. The processes of such a mind it is too hazardous to attempt to analyse. His vast memory tempted him sometimes to encumber himself with abstruse and useless literature. One is a little astonished that a creative brain, which is constantly working its materials into new shapes, and combinations, can reflect things precisely in the form and colours in which it receives them.—Even the "Paradise Lost" is occasionally patched with allusions of this kind.—There is, however, an unaccountable charm in the manner in which the poet occasionally mentions remote names of persons and places. A single word calls up a whole train of ideas:—but then this is a mere reference to an instructed and rich memory.

Milton's whole life ought to have been employed in creation, not reproduction. But this opinion will not perhaps be commonly assented to, or even understood. The poet was a powerful reasoner in his political and theological discussions, but not always free from obscurity or sophistry His heated mind saw certain questions in an exaggerated or partial view.

The time was now arriving, when it was necessary to throw away and forget politics. In spite of all his efforts, the monarchy was at length restored. He had now reason to dread the fate of the other regicides: it was necessary for a time to conceal himself: Vane and others were taken, condemned, and put to death. The part which Milton had taken in justifying the decapitation of the late king, by arguments and in language insulting and contemptuous, might reasonably have been expected to have marked him out to the Court for a signal object of vengeance. He was finally spared: by what influences this was effected, is now little known: this act of mercy reflects great honour on the government.

Though there are many reasons to suppose that Milton's poetical fame was yet but little acknowledged, this extraordinary regard shown to him by sparing his life raises a contrary inference.—He had no claims for forbearance from the King on account of his political talents:—these were powers which it must have been desirable to crush. The greater part of those who had the monarch's ear were profligate men, who, even if they had been well acquainted with the poetry which the bard had hitherto put forth, would not have enjoyed it: even Lord Clarendon seems to have had no taste for this sort of genius: he commends Cowley as having taken a flight beyond other votaries of the Muses; and the historian's warm loyalism, in theory as well as personal attachment, would have felt abhorrence beyond other men for the immortal bard's political writings. We are constrained to leave the cause of this mercy in the dark, and give the glory to those who exerted it.

Now came in a flood of poetasters from the French school; dissolute, base-minded, and demoralising,—with little genius, but some wit,—epigrammatists, satirists, and buffoons,—ridiculing all that was grave, praising nothing but what was worldly and unprincipled.

It is true that Dryden was now beginning to work himself into fame, but on the French model; which, however, he improved by the force of thought and language, and harmony of vigorous versification. I need not observe how unlike was the genius of Milton and of Dryden: Johnson has admirably analysed the latter, to which his own taste inclined. He who is partial to Dryden will never, I think, much relish Milton; though it will be objected that the case was otherwise with Gray, who is said to have united his admiration of both. There is a want of grandeur, of sentiment, of creation, of *visionariness* in Dryden. His style is clear, powerful, and buoyant; but his thoughts are often common, and his imagery is unpicturesque and vague: he was more intellectual than imaginative: his mind was turned to the world, and the observances of actual and daily life: he was often happy in acuteness of discrimination upon the manners and characters of the time: witness his portrait of Achitophel (Lord Shaftesbury). Here the extreme subtlety of his understanding displayed itself in full force.

This was exactly what suited the reigning taste at this epoch. Let us contemplate Milton while such things were the rage. He had now withdrawn himself from the angry and harsh contests in which he had been so many years engaged, and was

contemplating battles a thousand-fold more exalted, of rebel angels with almighty power. Never, in his more worldly employments, seeing things but in their grandest phases, with what calm scorn must he now have looked down upon the petty witticisms of what the Court and nation now considered the brilliant emanations of poetic genius! Davenant was his friend, and Milton may have found some fine things in Gondibert; but there are no traces that the two poets had at this period any familiarity or intercourse. I do not recollect that Milton and Cowley were acquainted; nor do Milton's early poems seem to have come under Cowley's notice: if they had, he would assuredly have quoted them in his "Prose Essays." *

The conduct of those who were now re-admitted to power was too well calculated to confirm the poet's hatred of monarchy: but in silent solitude and darkness he worked complacently on. Conscious of his own superiority of genius, he did not regard the loud applauses of the mob in favour of others. He did not wonder that the dissolute in life should have no taste for the pure spiritualities of true poetry: he relied upon the rewards of posterity with a just and sure faith. While others were groping upon earth in sensual pleasures, he lived by his imagination in heaven: his outward blindness did but strengthen his inward light. Perhaps but for this blindness his creative faculties had not been sufficiently concentrated to produce his great poem. Something of this opinion he seems himself to have entertained; thus drawing comfort from his misfortune. He was now shut out from worldly distractions; and the day was as the covering calm of night to him. The humility of his fortune, the singularity of his habits, all aided contemplation. The Muse can never live, except feebly and languidly, amid material luxuries: she delights in the majesty of thought, the scorn of all sublunary pleasures.

The poet, in his long intercourse with the busy world, had, like others, shown the human passions of anger, bitterness, contempt, and invective;—he now threw them all off: they nowhere appear in the sublime poetry he now produced, unless perhaps by slight allusion in a few passages of "Samson Agonistes," where the memory of the past revives a few stings.

In 1665 Milton married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, daughter of Sir Edward Minshull, knight, of an ancient Cheshire family. She survived him above fifty years, and retiring to Nantwich in Cheshire, died there in 1727.

Ellwood, the quaker, now undertook to read to him, for the sake of the advantage of his conversation and instruction.† When the plague raged in London, 1665, Ellwood received Milton and his family into his house at Chalfont St. Giles, in Buckinghamshire. Here Ellwood says it was that the poet communicated to him the manuscript of "Paradise Lost."

Bishop Newton remarks, that considering the difficulties "under which the author lay, his uneasiness at the public affairs and his own, his age and infirmities, his not being now in circumstances to maintain an amanuensis, but obliged to make use of any hand that came next to write his verses as he made them, it is really wonderful that he should have the spirit to undertake such a work, and much more that he should ever bring it to perfection."

At this time he addressed a beautiful Latin letter to his friend Peter Heimbach, a German, of which the following is Hayley's translation:—

"If, among so many funerals of my countrymen, in a year so full of pestilence and sorrow, you were induced, as you say, by rumour to believe that I also was snatched away, it is not surprising; and if such a rumour prevailed among those of your nation as it seems to have done, because they were solicitous for my health, it is not unpleasing; for I must esteem it as a proof of their benevolence towards me. But by the graciousness of God, who had prepared for me a safe retreat in the country, I am still alive and well; and, I trust, not utterly an unprofitable servant, whatever duty in life there yet remains for me to fulfil. That you remember me after so long an interval in our correspondence, gratifies me exceedingly: though, by the politeness of your expression, you seem to afford me room to suspect that you have rather forgotten me, since, as you say, you admire in me so many different virtues wedded together. From so many weddings I should assuredly dread a family

* In fact, when they appeared in 1645, he was in the King's service, and personally attended His Majesty; and he died in 1667, before the second edition of the poems, and the very year in which the "Paradise Lost" was published.

† See Ellwood's "Autobiography," and see T. Warton's character of this book in Todd, i. 187.

too numerous, were it not certain that in narrow circumstances, and under severity of fortune, virtues are most excellently reared and most flourishing. Yet one of these said virtues has not very handsomely rewarded me for entertaining her; for that which you call my political virtue, and which I should rather wish you to call my devotion to my country (enchanting me with her captivating name), almost, if I may say so, expatriated me. Other virtues, however, join their voices to assure me that wherever we prosper in rectitude, there is our country. In ending my letter, let me obtain from you this favour; that if you find any parts of it incorrectly written, and without stops, you will impute it to the boy who writes for me, who is utterly ignorant of Latin, and to whom I am forced (wretchedly enough) to repeat every single letter that I dictate. I still rejoice that your merit as an accomplished man, whom I knew as a youth of the highest expectation, has advanced you so far in the honourable favour of your prince. For your prosperity in every other point you have both my wishes and my hopes. Farewell.

"London, August 26, 1666."

CHAPER XV.

MILTON'S CONTEMPORARIES—"PARADISE REGAINED" AND "SAMSON AGONISTES."

On 27th April, 1667, Milton sold his "Paradise Lost" to Samuel Simmons for an immediate payment of five pounds; another five pounds to be paid on the sale of thirteen hundred copies of the first edition; a third five pounds on the sale of the same number of the second edition; and the same sum after an equal sale of the third edition;—each edition not to exceed fifteen hundred copies. In two years the poet recovered the second payment: he did not live to receive the other payments: therefore 2800 copies had not been sold in seven years.

Johnson and others contend that the sale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in these times, was a proof that the poet's merit was not unfelt. I do not think so. John Dennis observes in a passage of his "Familiar Letters," quoted by Mitford, that "never any poet left a greater reputation behind him than Mr. Cowley, while Milton remained obscure and known but to few; but the great reputation of Cowley did not continue half a century, and Milton's is now on the pinnacle of the Temple of Fame."

Mitford enumerates the following poets as contemporary with Milton:—"Waller, Suckling, Crashaw, Denham, Lovelace, Brome, Sherborne, Fanshaw, Davenant, besides others of inferior note." He might have added—Habington, Stanley, Carew, Herbert, Withers. But none of these were of any mark, or power of invention, unless Cowley and Davenant. It does continue to appear to me extraordinary, that so many false and petty beauties should start up successively to be the temporary fashion of poetry. Invention is not improbability: it is to embody and bring before others the spirits of the past and the absent; it is not the trick of flowery or sparkling language: but the busy-bodies of a nation,—they who give the tone in society, having no natural taste or feeling,—require artificial stimulants. The court of Charles II. was too much adulterated to endure the spiritual grandeur of Milton: he would have dispelled all the delusions of the wicked magician of voluptuousness: his sternness, his haughty wisdom, his unbending dogmas, were to them terrible and revolting.

At the same time, though the exalted bard was little noticed by the "fashionable world," or by popular authors, we cannot suppose that he found no readers. That class of learned men, who were now thrown into the shade,—the republican party,—must have remembered and admired Milton's zeal in their cause, and have had the curiosity to read his poem; but perhaps in silence and obscurity.

Dryden, too, though of so different a genius and taste, as well as politics, was fully sensible of the poet's merit. In the preface to his "State of Innocence," soon after Milton's death, he says, "I cannot, without injury to the deceased author of 'Paradise Lost,' but acknowledge that this poem has received its entire foundation, part of the design, and many of the ornaments from him. What I have borrowed will be so easily discerned from my mean productions, that I shall not need to point the reader to the places; and truly I should be sorry, for my own sake, that any one should take the pains to compare them together; the original being undoubtedly one

of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems, which either this age or nation has produced."

Other notices are collected by Todd, which it is not necessary to repeat.

In 1688 appeared a folio edition of the "Paradise Lost," under the patronage of Lord Somers: in 1695 appeared a third folio edition, with the learned commentary of Patrick Hume.

In 1670 appeared the poet's "History of England," carried down to the Norman Conquest; which was mutilated by the licenser, by striking out passages which have since been recovered and replaced.

In 1671 were published the "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes." It is said that Milton was mortified at finding that the former was considered inferior to the "Paradise Lost." It is inferior because it has less invention; but, in many of the sublime merits of the last, not at all inferior: there is more of human interest in it. Nor is the "Samson Agonistes" the production of a less vigorous and majestic genius.

The "Paradise Regained" is supposed to have been planned or begun at Chalfont. Ellwood, having called on the poet after his return to London, was shown by him this poem, with the remark, "This is owing to you; for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont." He is said to have written it in a state of uninterrupted fervor, according to the spirit which he names as inherent in him, in a letter to his friend Deodate, September 2nd, 1637:—

"It is my way to suffer no impediment, no love of ease, no avocation whatever, to chill the ardour, to break the continuity, or divert the completion of my literary pursuits."

In several passages of the "Samson Agonistes" the poet is supposed to allude to his own feelings and fate, especially in these lines, beginning at v. 75:—

I, dark in light, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half,
O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day! &c.

Hayley says, "In these lines the poet seems to paint himself. The litigation of his will produced a collection of evidence relating to the testator, which renders the discovery of those long-forgotten papers peculiarly interesting: they show very forcibly, and in new points of view, his domestic infelicity and his amiable disposition. The tender and sublime poet, whose sensibility and sufferings were so great, appears to have been almost as unfortunate in his daughters as the Lear of Shakspeare. A servant declares in evidence, that her deceased master, a little before his last marriage, had lamented to her the ingratitude and cruelty of his children: he complained that they combined to defraud him in the economy of his house, and sold several of his books in the basest manner. His feelings on such an outrage, both as a parent and a scholar, must have been singularly painful; perhaps they suggested to him these very pathetic lines."

Dunster adds, that, "as it appears, from the latest discoveries relating to the domestic life of Milton, that his wife was particularly attentive to him, and treated his infirmities with much tenderness, this passage seems to restrict the time when this drama was written to a period previous to his last marriage, or at least nearly to that immediate time while the singular ill-treatment of his daughters was fresh in his memory." This also coincides with what Mr. Hayley observed respecting its being written immediately after the execution of Sir Henry Vane, which took place June 14th, 1662. Milton was then in his fifty-fourth year, in which* we are told he married his third wife. This would make the "Samson Agonistes" at least three years prior to the "Paradise Regained;" of which we know he had not thought previous to the summer of 1665.

In that magnificent passage beginning at l. 667,—

God of our fathers! what is man,
That thou towards him with hand so various,

* Not till 1665.

Or might I say contrarious,
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rulest
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute?
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That wandering loose about,
Grow up and perish, as the summer fly,
Heads without name, no more remember'd;
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,
To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect.
Yet towards these thus dignified, thou oft,
Amidst their highth of noon,
Changest thy countenance, and thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.
Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscured, which were a fair dismission;
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high,
Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission;
Oft leavest them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls of prey, or else captived;
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deform'd,
In crude old age;
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days: in fine,
Just or unjust alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end;—

Bishop Newton says, that, in speaking of the unjust tribunals, Milton reflected on the trials and sufferings of his party after the Restoration; and that when he talks of poverty, this was his own case; he escaped with life, but lived in poverty; and though he was always very sober and temperate, yet he was much afflicted with the gout, and other "painful diseases in crude old age,"—when he was not yet a very old man.

"But," Newton adds, "Milton was the most heated enthusiast of his time: speaking of Charles the First's murder, in his 'Defence of the People of England,' he says, 'Quanquam ego hæc divino potius instinctu gesta esse crediderim, quoties memoriâ repeto,'" &c.

The poet goes on:—

Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

"These concluding verses," says Hayley, "of this beautiful chorus appear to me particularly affecting, from the persuasion that Milton, in composing them, addressed the last two immediately to Heaven, as a prayer for himself. If the conjecture of this application be just, we may add, that never was the prevalence of a righteous prayer more happily conspicuous; and let me here remark, that, however various the opinions of men may be concerning the merits or demerits of Milton's political character, the integrity of his heart appears to have secured to him the favour of Providence; since it pleased the Giver of all good not only to turn his labour to a peaceful end, but to irradiate his declining life with the most abundant portion of those pure and sublime mental powers, for which he had constantly and fervently prayed, as the choicest bounty of Heaven."

Again, Hayley thinks that at l. 759 Milton alludes to his own connubial infelicity, and regret for his forgiveness at the repentance of his first wife, suspicious of its sincerity.

But it is not only to the unhappiness of his marriage that Milton alludes in this stern poem: he also renews his political prejudices at l. 1418.

> Lords are lordliest in their wine,
> And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
> With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned;
> No less the people on their holydays
> Impetuous, insolent, &c.

Warton observes that he here expresses his contempt of a nobility and an opulent clergy, that is, lords both spiritual and temporal, who by no means coincided with his levelling and narrow principles of republicanism and Calvinism, and whom he tacitly compares with the lords and priests of the idol Dagon.

There can be no doubt that the whole of this poem arose out of the state of Milton's personal feelings at the Restoration. It is the blaze of a mind as gigantic as Samson's form and strength. His imagination is everywhere on fire both with intellectual and material visions. A vulgar taste in poetry would call the nakedness of his language prosaic: but in the enthusiasm of forceful thought the petty ornaments of language are disregarded. It is in the exaltation of the soul, in belief in visionary presence, that high poetry consists.

We are bound to contemplate the bard in these lofty moods;—to think how his spirit rose above his unprosperous and painful situation;—and with what sublime images, sentiments, and reflections, he soothed himself!—How he glowed when he imagined Samson pulling down destruction on the heads of his foes!—His vigorous and enthusiastic mind roused him to be thus ready to devote himself to the common ruin.

Though now retired, neglected, and subject to many stings of disappointment, I doubt not he was altogether happier than when his mere memory, observation, and judgment were occupied in the coarse conflict of practical affairs. Imagination is more gratifying than memory, and idealism than reality. It is difficult to conceive how so creative a mind could so long bend itself to the servile office of secretaryship: to find correctness of expression in a dead language for diplomatic communications was but a pedantic employment; and a waste of powers which ought only to have been applied to the highest intellectual exertions.

It is clear, however, that by whatever arguments the poet might reconcile himself to his blindness, there were moments when he felt most bitterly the deprivation: the passages I have cited from "Samson Agonistes" prove this. In his poverty he could not employ a skilful and learned amanuensis, who could take down his expressions with facility: the aid and consolation of books, except at the mercy of others, were shut to him. He grieved for the loss of that outward view of the face of nature in which he had delighted: he could no longer roam alone at his own will amid the woods and forests and green fields: he sat of a sunny morning in his house-porch, enjoying the fresh air; but this was in a suburb of the great city, in a confined garden: the freedom of limb, the exhilaration of bounding exercise, the breasting of the blowing wind, the change of the fresh breeze, which varies with each contending step, were not his!

> O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon!

All was blank, and every footstep was feeble and tottering, and at the mercy of another. We perceive that after a life of such high virtue as he was conscious that he had led, there were bitter hours when he thought this fate hard. As his endowments were sublime, so were his expectations lofty: his temper was naturally scornful; and as he could himself do mighty things, so perhaps he demanded more of others than they could well perform. He had not descended to a minute obervance of all the flexibilities, ductilities, and windings of the human character: he did not forgive or consider its littleness, its petty passions, and mean and ignorant thoughts.

It seems to me to be a biographer's duty thus to analyse the character of a great man, if it be done with a conscientious desire of explaining the truth. Mere facts, uncommented on, are neither interesting nor instructive: better omit the comment than do it frivolously or affectedly; still less, maliciously. I myself have no doubt that the poet was wrong in his political opinions; but I have still less doubt that he was strictly conscientious in them. To call in question the sincerity of his protestations and aspirations,—his magnificent effusions of holy hope and enthusiasm,—would be not only stupid, but wicked.

CHAPTER XVI.

MILTON'S DEATH.

There are certain minor points which it is very useful to ascertain, but which, when once established, do not require to be repeated; such are many of the particulars verified with the most exemplary labour by Todd. If any thing were wanting, Mitford has gone over the ground again with acute and discriminate taste and judgment: a poet himself, of deep feeling, and eloquent originality.

I will however just mention, that the poet did not entirely abandon literary production after having published the two magnificent poems last noticed. In 1672 he put forth his "Artis Logicæ Plenior Institutio;" and in 1673 his "Treatise of True Religion, Heresy," &c.

In the year of his death he published his "Familiar Letters in Latin," with some "Academical Exercises."

In the preceding year he reprinted his "Juvenile Poems," with additions, among which is the "Tractate on Education," published in 1644.

His health now gave way fast, and his fits of the gout became violent; but such was the firmness of his mind, that Aubrey says, even in the paroxysms of this fell disease, "he would be very cheerful, and sing." He died quietly at his house in Bunhill-fields, on Sunday, November 8th, 1674; wanting only a month of completing his sixty-sixth year. Thus departed the greatest epic poet of England,—and, in my opinion, of any country or age. He was buried near his father, in the chancel of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

His person was beautiful in youth, but his face too delicate: he was of middle height, active, and a good swordsman; temperate in his food, and all his habits of life, except in study, in which he indulged to excess even from his childhood. His evenings were usually passed in music and conversation: his chief time of composition appears to have been the night; and by the aid of a most retentive memory, he dictated in the morning to an amanuensis what he had thus composed.

His biographers say that he was of an equal and placid temper: but this is not the character given by Mrs. Powell, the mother of his first wife; who, however, was an angry and prejudiced witness. Todd has printed a full account of his nuncupative will, which was first discovered by T. Warton, and which, being contested, furnishes several curious particulars of his domestic habits. He had an humble establishment, consisting of two maid-servants and a man-servant: he dined usually in his kitchen.* He never was a man of worldly ostentation, and always despised money: he seems to have been stern to his daughters, and exacted too much from them; they accordingly did not steadily love him. It must have been an irksome task to them to read to him in languages which they did not understand.

As to the poet's religious tenets, a treatise has been lately recovered from the State-Paper Office, which has made a great noise among the theologists; the title is, "De Doctrina Christiana, ex Sacris duntaxat Libris petita, Disquisitionum Libri duo posthumi." King George IV. put it into the hands of Dr. Sumner (afterwards Bishop of Winchester), to be edited and translated. It is said that the poet, being dissatisfied with the Bodies of Divinity then published, was thus induced to compile one for himself. This treatise is considered to prove that Milton was finally an Arian. It is calmly and moderately written; not with the animosity of a controversialist, but it wants the author's former or usual recondite learning and argumentative force.

Bishop Burgess, considering that this work disproves the poet's orthodoxy, has disputed its genuineness;† but it is generally admitted that its authenticity cannot be doubted.‡ This extraordinary treatise contains many singular opinions, which none but theologists will take the trouble to discuss.§

Milton left three daughters:—Anne, who was deformed, and died in childbed; Mary, who died single; and Deborah, who married Abraham Clarke, a weaver in

* This was long afterwards, in Geneva, the custom of the highest and most opulent Genevan families. See Picot, "Histoire de Genève."

† 8vo. 1826.

‡ See discussions on Milton's tenets here let out, in "Edinburgh Review," No. CVII., September, 1831; and see Mitford's note, "Life," p. cx.

§ See the American (Dr. Channing's) "Remarks on the Character and Writings of Milton."

Spitalfields, and died, aged seventy-six, in August, 1727. Her daughter married Thomas Foster, also a weaver in Spitalfields, and died at Islington, May 9th, 1754, in her sixty-sixth year.*

Sir Christopher Milton, the poet's only brother, was knighted and made a judge by James II., but soon retired from the bench. He retired to Ipswich, and afterwards to the village of Rushmere, about two miles distant, where he died; and was buried in the church of St. Nicholas, Ipswich, March 22nd, 1692. He left children.†

Milton had also two nephews by his sister Philips,—John Philips and Edward Philips, both authors.‡

CHAPTER XVII.

GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

I NOW come to general observations on the poet's character and genius: of these I have already intermixed some in the course of the narrative: if I recur to any of the same opinions and reflections, although in other words, I must crave the reader's indulgence.

Of this "greatest of great men," the private traits and whole life were congenial to his poetry. Men of narrow feelings will say that his political writings contradict this congeniality. His politics were, no doubt, violent and fierce; but it cannot be doubted that they were conscientious. He lived at a crisis of extraordinary public agitation, when all the principles of government were moved to their very foundations, and when there was a general desire to commence institutions *de novo*.

In his early poems there are occasional passages which show his taste for monarchical and aristocratic manners; for the pomp of the state and the church; for the glories of chivalry and the feudal system; for the halls of "knights and barons bold;" for the music and the solemn gloom of magnificent cathedrals:—

> the high-embowed roof,
> With antic pillars massy-proof;
> And storied windows, richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.
> There let the pealing organ blow
> To the full-voiced quire below,
> In service high and anthems clear, &c.—Il Penseroso.

Milton's imagination was not at all suited to the cold and dry hypocrisy of a Puritan; but his gigantic mind gave him a temper that spurned at all authority. This was his characteristic through life: it showed itself in every thought and every action, both public and private, from his earliest youth; except that he did not appear to rebel against parental authority: for nothing is more beautiful than his mild and tender expostulation to his father, in that exquisite Latin address which has been quoted.

His great poems require such a stretch of mind in the reader, as to be almost painful. The most amazing copiousness of learning is sublimated into all his conceptions and descriptions. His learning never oppressed his imagination; and his imagination never obliterated or dimmed his learning: but even these would not have done, without the addition of a great heart and a pure and lofty mind.

That mind was given up to study and meditation from his boyhood till his death; he had no taste for the vulgar pleasures of life; he was all spiritual. But he loved fame enthusiastically, and was ready to engage in the great affairs of public business: and when he did engage, performed his part with industry, skill, and courage. Courage, indeed, mingled, in a prominent degree, among his many other mighty and splendid qualities.

Who is equal to analyse a mind so rich, so powerful, so exquisite?

I do not think that tenderness was his characteristic; and he was, above all other men, unyielding. His softer sensibilities were rather reflective than instan-

* Sir James Mackintosh found the last descendant of Milton, parish-clerk at Madras.

† See pedigrees of Knights made by Charles II. and James II., collected by De Neve, inter Mss. Brit. Mus.

‡ See their "Lives" by Godwin. See also "Theatrum Poetarum," Canterbury, 1800; and again Geneva, 1824.

taneous; his sentiments came from his imagination, rather than his imagination from his sentiments.

The vast fruits of his mind always resulted from complex ingredients; though they were so amalgamated, that with him they became simple in their effects. It is impossible now to trace the processes of his intellect. We cannot tell what he would have been without study; but we know that he must have been great under any circumstances, though his greatness might have been of a different kind.

He made whatever he gathered from others his own; he only used it as an ingredient for his own combinations.

His earliest study seems to have been the holy writings; they first fed his fancy with the imagery of Eastern poetry; and nowhere could he have found so sublime a nutriment. But what is any nutriment to him who cannot taste, digest, and be nourished? It depends not upon the force and excellence of what is conveyed; but upon the power of the recipient: it is, almost all, inborn genius, though it may be under the influence of some small modification from discipline.

However great and wonderful Milton was, there were some points in which both Spenser and Shakspeare exceeded him; because in those points nature had been more favourable to them. Probably both Spenser and Shakspeare were more ductile to the world. Milton was stern, solitary, unbending, contemptuous, proud, yet unostentatious. With his disposition and taste, he was little observant of the minor manners and characters of society: he was always thoughtful, inflexible, and abstracted. Loftiness of musing was the sphere in which he lived: his books were his companions; his imagination surrounded him with another and a spiritual world.

Providence has endowed us with the power to conceive what is more magnificent and more beautiful than that which the material world exhibits. We know not why —it is among the mysteries of the Almighty.

If he who nurses these spiritualities is at the same time a materialist in action, then we may doubt the good of them: but assuredly Milton was not guilty of this inconsistency. Read all his earnest and eloquent professions of innocence; and who can hesitate to give credit to them? His controversial opponents have attempted to throw dirt upon him, but have not succeeded. He provoked the most bitter hostility; yet no immorality could be fastened upon him.

Allowing the poet to have been harsh and choleric, yet the sanctity of his disposition and character appears to be demonstrative. I can reconcile this with his severe politics, though those seem, certainly, not very merciful.

Superficial minds, affecting the tone of wisdom, hold out that the gifts of the Muse are incompatible with serious business. Milton, the greatest of poets, affords a crushing answer to this. In the flower of his manhood, and through middle age, he was a statist, and active man of executive affairs in a crisis of unexampled difficulty and danger. His controversial writings, both in politics and divinity, are solid, vigorous, original, and practical; and yet he could return at last to the highest flights of the Muse, undamped and undimmed.

The lesson of his life is one of the most instructive that biography affords: it shows what various and dissimilar powers may be united in the same person, and what a grandeur of moral principles may actuate the human heart; but at the same time it shows how little all these combined talents and virtues can secure the due respect and regard of contemporaries. It is absurd to deny that Milton was neglected during his life, and that his unworldly-mindedness let the meanest of the people mount over his head. He lived poor, and for the most part in obscurity. Even high employments in the state seem to have obtained him no luxuries, and few friends or acquaintance: no brother poets flocked round him; none praised him, though in the habit of flattering each other.

The poet, indeed, might have been employed more consistently with his sublime genius than in political and theological controversy. He lost nineteen precious years of his middle life in those irritating occupations, from the age of thirty-two to fifty-one: after that age he occupied the remaining fourteen years of his life principally in poetry. His controversies had not sullied his imagination, nor affected the sanctity of his thoughts, language, or temper:—I mean, after these degrading labours ceased; for, while busy in them, they must have necessarily embittered his feelings and lowered his mind. It is melancholy to think how much of grand invention, which he might in those long years have put forth, has been lost to the world.

I do not say that the writings which during that period he did put forth have been entirely useless; but they were beneath Milton's best powers, and might probably have been executed by inferior talents. I here suppose them excellent in their department and unmixed with mischief; but this is more than can be conceded positively to them. The notions of republicanism are assuredly carried too far; and nothing can be more dangerous than to resist all authority, and call in question all ancient institutions.

If intellect is the grand glory of man, Milton stands pre-eminent above all other human beings; above Homer, Virgil, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Spenser, and Shakspeare! To the highest grandeur of invention upon the sublimest subject he unites the greatest wisdom and learning, and the most perfect art. Almost all other poets sink into twinkling stars before him. What has issued from the French school of poetry seems to be the production of an inferior order of beings, and in this I include even our Dryden and Pope; for I cannot place these two famous men among the greatest poets: they may be among the first of a secondary class.

It is easy to select fine passages from minor poetical authors; but a great poet must be tried by his entirety,—by the uniform texture of his web.

Milton has a language of his own; I may say, invented by himself. It is somewhat hard, but it is all sinew: it is not vernacular, but has a latinized cast, which requires a little time to reconcile a reader to it. It is best fitted to convey his own magnificent ideas: its very learnedness impresses us with respect: it moves with a gigantic step: it does not flow, like Shakspeare's style; nor dance, like Spenser's. Now and then there are transpositions somewhat alien to the character of the English language, which is not well-calculated for transposition; but in Milton this is perhaps a merit, because his lines are pregnant with deep thought and sublime imagery, which require us to dwell upon them, and contemplate them over and over. He ought never to be read rapidly; his is a style which no one ought to imitate till he is endowed with a soul like Milton's. His ingredients of learning are so worked into his original thoughts, that they form a part of them; they are never patches.

One would wish to present to oneself the mental and moral character of Milton even from his childhood. Probably he was absorbed in himself, and by no means ductile; lonely in his pleasures, uncompanionable, and seemingly sullen; angry when interrupted in his books: satirical or contemptuous at frivolous conversation; contradictory when roused, and hardy when answered: estimated doubtfully by his father; sometimes praised; sometimes raising high expectations; sometimes causing fear, and even anger and remonstrance.

Genius will never be dictated to; and few observers can distinguish this repugnance from an obstinate and dull indocility. They, on the contrary, who are quick to apprehend, but who have no ideas of their own, take things rapidly and without resistance.

One should like to imagine the difference of early character, habits, sentiments, pursuits, conduct, and temper, between Milton and Gray; both sons of men following the same calling, both living in the bustle of the city, and both addicted to literary occupations. There was this primary difference, that Milton had a good father, and Gray a bad one.

Milton was probably more stern; Gray more tender and morbid: Milton more confident and aspiring; Gray more fearful and hopeless. Each loved books and learning, and each had an exquisite taste. Milton was more vigorous, Gray more nice. Both were imaginative and fond of romantic fiction: but Milton was more enterprising. Gray's fastidiousness impeded him; he was

A puny insect, shivering at the breeze.

Milton was dauntless, defiant, and, when insulted, fierce; perhaps ferocious: nothing shook his self-reliance. Gray was driven back even by a frown.

The "Elegiac Bard" might have done tenfold more than he did, if he had been more courageous, but could never have done what Milton has done: he had not the same invention, nor the same natural sublimity. Milton was far the happier being, though he engaged in controversies which Gray's peaceful spirit would have avoided. Milton was a practical statesman; Gray would have been utterly unfit to engage in affairs of state.

Gray's spirits were partly broken by the unprincipled and brutal conduct of his father to his mother; but they were naturally low: his inborn sensitiveness amounted to disease. He seems to have been more delicate and precise in his clas-

sical scholarship, and more exact in all his knowledge; but it was not so mingled up with original thought, and therefore not so valuable: his memory was often mere memory, and therefore was exact. This did not arise from inability, but from timidity and indolence: he lived in the solemn and monotonous cloisters of a college; he had nothing of the ordinary movements of life to excite him: all the faculties of his mind, therefore, except his memory, were often stagnant. The memory works best when the passions are least moved.

The dim misty grey hues of vacant despondence will chill the lips and palsy the voice. Who fears the ridicule or censure of men, but anticipates not the cheer of triumph, will want the sources of energy and enterprise. The blood must glow in the veins, and the heart must dance, to enable us to do great things.

We cannot doubt that this was the case with Milton: many noble passages regarding himself in his prose works prove it: he nursed glorious and holy hopes from his childhood. Afterwards, in the midst of the foulest calumnies, he was undaunted and undismayed. Even in the most perilous times, when the ban of proscription and the sword of death were hanging over his head, he conceived, and partly composed his "Paradise Lost." He had a spring of soul which nothing could relax.

Magnanimity grows strong by opposition and difficulty; and when a difficulty is conquered, the energy is doubled: no one knows what powers are in him till he is pressed: when they come out from pressure, hope and confidence come with them. It is not till after we have been tried that we trust to ourselves: then we stand unmoved by the blast, and laugh at the storm. All genuine power grows more vigorous after it has been tried

Thousands go down to the grave, unconscious of the native faculties, which, if exercised, might have distinguished them: but buried faculties are an incumbrance, and breed diseases; and it cannot be doubted that this was one of the maladies of Gray. Milton was never to be silenced: the fire within found vent; and then his great heart was at ease, and triumphed.

There was not the same force and depth in his early Latin poems as in his early English: this perhaps arose from the constraint of writing in a foreign and dead language. He was compelled to look to models; and whatever merits the ancient classic poets have, they have not the sombre tone and colouring, and the picturesque imaginativeness, which began in the Italian school with Dante. Of that school Milton was the noblest and most inborn scholar: in some of his earliest English verses he caught Dante's magnificent darkness, his mystical images, his spiritual visions.

Milton is never an empty dealer in words; it is always the thought, the sentiment, the image, which impels him to speak: it breathes—it throws forth the raciness of life. His earliest poems travel out of the track of mere observation, and explore the spiritual world. He ventures among miracles, and hears aerial voices, and rises among the choirs of angels. In any but the most sublime genius it would have been rash hardihood to have entered so early on such unearthly subjects. He has acquitted himself with the vigour of the most matured age.

If the "Hymn on the Nativity" was a college exercise, its original force is the more extraordinary, because he was under the surveillance of technical judges; and nothing but a master-genius could have emboldened him to take his own peculiar course. How those to whom it was addressed must have stared when they compared it with the creeping, feeble, lame, colloquial, trite compositions which surrounded it! They must have started, half annoyed, half doubting, half delighted against their will, half shrinking at what they suspected to be rebellious audacity; half recollecting models; then beginning to think that the young poet had found out a new language, but whispering to themselves that heresies from admitted models ought to be discouraged.

The example was not followed; no one caught the tone: probably it was found too difficult to assume. No one had the genius, or the force, or the taste to achieve it. The first edition of the "Juvenile Poems" appeared in 1645; no other was called for, for nearly thirty years.

It is wilful misrepresentation, therefore, to say that these poems received much notice from Milton's contemporaries. They are far above the taste of his age, or perhaps of the immediate popular taste of any age. Common readers love common passions, and the images which are familiar to them; they like practical observations upon actual daily life, and witticisms upon their neighbours, rivals, and superiors.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OBSERVATIONS ON MILTON'S POETRY CONTINUED.

Milton lived in a time, perhaps, more propitious to poetry than even the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Superstition, chivalry, and romance had begun to abate; but philosophy and reason had commenced their influence, without checking imagination. The times were stirring, and such times are propitious to the Muse. The public mind began to let itself loose from old chains.

From the days of the Restoration there has been no poetical freedom of mind; unless in our own latter days.

The counteraction to the favourableness I have spoken of, was the metaphysical taste introduced by King James. That monarch had no imagination, but a ridiculous pedantry. Talents of a secondary nature, which were the slaves of example, might bow to this; but bad models would not repel genius while it could choose its own.

The language had not yet arrived at fastidiousness: the picturesque energies of feudal chivalry were not forgotten, nor had their influence over the imagination entirely ceased: they were enough in the belief of the people to be capable of being recalled. The drama had arrived at great force of excellence, though mixed with many irregularities.

The ranks and characters of society were yet distinctly marked. There was luxury and polish without effeminacy; learning had not yet exhausted itself; if the court was corrupt, it was not yet frivolous. There was enthusiasm of loyalty, and enthusiasm of rebellion.

The age of Elizabeth was imaginative and romantic, but not classical; the age of James was pedantic; the age of Charles was fitted for a sober heroism.

Milton had the encouragement of foreigners for his early Latin poetry, which received their high praise when he travelled into Italy. Gray, equally eminent by similar compositions about the same age, did not exhibit to them his talents in this department; if he had received the same approbation, it would not have given him the same confidence. One was all buoyancy, the other all depression; one had received his father's encouragement, the other his father's blight; one had vowed himself to glory, the other was too timid to think of it.

Of modern poets, Gray's epithets are perhaps most picturesque; but they do not unite with them visionariness, like Milton's. Examine the "Elegy in the Churchyard;" they are all pictures of material realities. All the descriptions in that beautiful poem are merely such as a curious and tasteful eye could derive from observation only; there is no invention.

In all the descriptive poems of Milton there is rich and wonderful invention. The combinations in "Lycidas" are strikingly inventive: this is one of its marked features, and gives it that passion which shows itself in the excitement of the mind. There is a hurry of ideas; a conflict of lamentations and consolations.

In almost all the contemporary poetry there is flatness, lameness, and mean colloquiality; a high tone is never uniformly sustained: strong words are mixed with weak, and one half of a line falls from the other: in some, there is a feeble, thin, and conversational diffusion; as in old George Wither. It is sustainment which is Milton's characteristic excellence: single good lines may found in his predecessors. His strains are closely wrought, and everywhere with the golden thread; with grand images, and noble combinations of design.

Milton lived for the Muse; he vowed himself to the Muse. He professed it; he did not pretend to speak of it as a mere idle amusement, as if he was half ashamed of it: he knew its worth, its dignity, and its difficulties. No one wanting enthusiasm ever succeeded in this vocation: its purposes cannot be effected by doubtful spirits and faint hopes. Gray affected to write merely as an occasional amusement, and not to make a business of it; this affectation was beneath a great mind.

Spenser is allegorical throughout; Milton is only occasionally allegorical. Spenser is the poet of chivalry; Milton is the poet of the Bible. Milton therefore is not properly romantic, nor a poet risen out of the feudal ages. He addresses himself to all nations, all ages, all manners,—all mankind: he has indeed many casts of words, and many images derived from the compositions which originated with the Troubadours; and he would not have been what he is, unless Dante and

the Italian school had preceded him. Milton was a massy "cloth of gold," while others were a slight fabric of slight materials.

Part of Dante's grandeur lies in a mystical brevity peculiar to himself. Milton sketches out his figures more fully and clearer; yet they are more difficult to sketch, because they are above humanity; whereas Dante most alludes to human characters, and their conduct on earth. This alone proves the superiority of Milton over Dante: but then Dante lived in a darker age, when the revival of learning was in its infancy: Milton had many great examples of poetical fiction before him.

Beautiful and rich as Spenser is, Milton has taken little of his cast: there is not much similarity in their language, and none in their rhythm: their fictions are of different materials, and in different forms. Milton had always a predilection for sacred subjects: he seems to have turned more to the dramatists for expression and sentiment, and even imagery; Shakspeare especially, Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher. That Sylvester was such a favourite, must be accounted for by impressions made upon his childhood.

Milton seems always to have kept aloof in his holiness: he thus did not suffer his mind to be diluted by vulgar thoughts. The effect of his deep meditations and studies was never broken in upon. He kept up his dignity, his self-esteem, and the pride and ambition of his calling. By mingling much with the world we catch its petty passions, and lower ourselves to its tone and temperament. The facts which have been handed down to us of his life, accord well with the character of his writings: he was fearless, and this added to his strength: a timid hand will never strike out noble notes.

If it could be proved that there is no virtue or sound sense in spirituality; that we can rely on nothing but the material objects presented to our view; then poetry would be an empty, uninstructive, and even delusive amusement: but I presume that they who attempt to set up such a philosophy will incur the disgrace of its meanness and its falsehood. All the charms and almost all the virtues of our being are spiritual. Nature has implanted in us the delight of looking to something beyond actual existences; and in gratifying this delight lies the magic of poetry. That poetry which does not attempt and perform this, scarcely deserves the name. Above all others, unless perhaps Shakspeare, Milton has performed it. What exquisite idealism and inventiveness there is in "Comus!"

But let no one mistake the fantastic for the inventive: this, instead of being a proof of genius, is proof of the want of it; yet the great vulgar, as well as the little vulgar, mistake one for the other. Charlatans in criticism consider that the mark of poetical invention is improbability, or impossibility: on this principle Homer and Virgil were minor poets. To bring the past to life is a primary purpose of poetry; this is true invention; not to describe forms merely, but mind and spirit, and internal movement. The power is in proportion to the dignity and grand characters of the actors brought into play; thus Milton rises not only to the height of humanity, but of angels good and bad, the obedient and the rebellious. What must have been the force and splendour of an imagination which could duly conceive and paint such beings. The excellence is in proportion as truth and probability are preserved in lofty creations. If this be the test, then what other poet can contend with Milton? Homer and Virgil have drawn heroes, but they were merely men: their imaginations have not risen to the wars of ethereal beings, and battles with the Almighty. And even in the softer scenes of mere human passions and enjoyments, how superior are Adam and Eve to all other personifications in poetry!

It has been objected that the subject is too lofty and solemn for human sympathy; —a tasteless and absurd criticism. Of mere earthly scenery, what can equal the garden of Eden? Or are we to have no interest in the description of it because we have lost it? On topics of almost inconceivable grandeur the poet never uses exaggerated language, but is sober, congenial, and speaks with a comprehensive majesty, as if he was master of his mighty subject, and elevated above human intellectuality. Every other bard would have betrayed weakess by inflated language. If he had thought about the minor artifices or ornaments of what is called poetry, he must have soon abandoned his task as beyond the power of human performance. All is in the thought; the plainer the language, the nobler as well as easier the execution. That frivolous adornment, that outward investment of flowers, of which petty artists boast, is mere trickery.

Had Milton taken a subject less divine, a subject from uninspired history, I doubt if he would have executed it with equal success. His own conceptions were too elevated to enter with minuteness into inferior characters: he knew not the feebler passions and little windings of the human heart: he could not draw the vast variety of man's obliquities, like Shakspeare. Whatever we are accustomed to admire in the best of other poets, sinks into paleness and insignificance before the splendour and sublimity of Milton.

But minor poets often fail, not only from want of native force, but because they propose to themselves false objects of excellence: they substitute perverse inventiveness for genuine creation; and too often describe and copy when they ought to invent. The poet should turn spirituality into imagery: but it must not be mere body,—it must have life, and thought, and soul. Milton has given something of material shape to the airy beings of a higher sphere, but he has never divested them of the bright and indefinable radiance of divinity.

There can be no unity in the description of inanimate nature, or in what is didactic; consequently there can be no perfect invention: it is only therefore in the epic or the dramatic that there can be poetry of the primary class: this will exclude from the first class many of the celebrated poets of our own country.

Looking to human agency, who has constructed with us a long and well-combined narrative of imaginary characters? If this merely human creation be difficult, what has Milton performed? How comparatively easy it is to personify and delineate the diversity in the moral and intellectual characters of mankind,—to put it in action amid the scenes of human life, and to show human passions in conflict! yet how rarely have even these powers been exhibited!

The true poet must create: he must leave artists to illustrate and adorn. Whoever employs himself much in the mechanism of composition, must be deficient in enthusiasm and warmth; he must feel no inspiration. Language will come of course to him who thinks profoundly, feels deeply, and sees with imaginative brightness. What is brilliant in itself, requires no ornament of paint and colours.

To study Milton's poetry is not merely the delight of every accomplished mind, but it is a duty. He who is not conversant with it, cannot conceive how far the genius of the Muse can go. They who have no mirror in their minds to receive and reflect, may be but slightly and dimly touched; but they must let the rays shine upon them, even as the sun falls upon the barren rocks; at some happy moment they may be benefited by the genial beams.

Here are none of the frivolous idlenesses; the wanton sports of imagination; the false voluptuousness; the whimsical fictions; the affected pathos; the sickly whinings; the forced deliriums; the raptures of extravagant words; the feigned melancholy; the morbid musings; the dreamy mistiness of unmeaning verbiage; the echoes of echoes of artificial sounds. All is pure majesty; the sober strength, the wisdom from above, that instructs and awes. It speaks as an oracle,—not with a mortal voice.

The bard, whatever might have been his inborn genius, could never have attained this height of argument and execution but by a life of laborious and holy preparation;—a constant conversance with the ideas suggested by the Sacred Writings; the habitual resolve to lift his mind and heart above earthly thoughts; the incessant exercise of all the strongest faculties of the intellect; retirement, temperance, courage, hope, faith.

He had all the aids of learning; all the fruit of all the wisdom of ages; all the effect of all that poetic genius, and all that philosophy had achieved: all were infused and mingled up in his mind with his own native growth. Had his learning been heaped on a mind of less native splendour, it could have produced none of these results: it fell upon a fire, which bore it up into a golden and ethereal flame.

While the gigantic productions of such a mind were in progress, the poet must have felt strong consolations for all his misfortunes, privations, and dangers; but not unmixed, it appears, with some regrets and some complainings. This last we must infer from the passages in "Samson Agonistes," already noticed.

Whoever is powerful in virtuous faculties, and exercises them as he ought, must necessarily feel a great and proud delight from the exertion; but in the noble employment of the mind there is unmingled delight: hours become like minutes, and days like hours. Sitting in the humble porch of his humble house, blind, poor,

meanly clad, unattended, how great must Milton have felt above all kings and conquerors of the earth,—above the possessors of the wealth of the world, the inhabitants of marble palaces and golden saloons! He knew his own dignity; and it was among his glories that he knew it. He never shrunk from the assertion of his own ascendancy. It did not lower his self-esteem to hear the popular shouts bestowed on his inferiors,—on Waller, and Cowley, and Denham, and the wits that basked in the sunshine of the Court, while he was neglected, and his sublime strains unfelt and untasted · he knew the day would come when all that was wise and great must acknowledge his supremacy.

Perhaps self-confidence was among his leading traits if he had been deficient in this quality he would never have performed what he did. It may produce rashness; where there is innate strength it will produce success. Temerity is better than a chilling and helpless fear; to have power, and not to know it, is worse perhaps than not to have it · whoever depends on the opinions of others, and cannot assert his own cause, is almost sure to be crushed

Nothing is more useful in literary biography than to endeavour to ascertain by what means others have attained extraordinary excellence. there must always be a concurrence of causes, of which some may perhaps be accidental: the inborn gift is first, and indispensable; but encouragement, discipline, and toil, are also necessary. It is clear that Milton showed the superiority of his endowments at ten years old, and all other concurrences would have done nothing without these.

Can any case be shown where true genius did not exhibit itself in early childhood? It appears to me very improbable. I know no ascertained case. An extreme sensibility is a primary ingredient this must show itself early. Sometimes common observers have mistaken the symptoms of genius; but this does not alter the case. Vulgar censors often take the appearances of genius in childhood for folly; as has been so beautifully described by Beattie, in "Young Edwin."

CHAPTER XIX.

RECAPITULATION OF MILTON'S PERSONAL CHARACTER.

I KNOW not that much can be added to the traits of Milton's character which I have already given. As in almost all cases of great genius, there is a consonance in the qualities of the poetry and the poet. Grandeur, inflexibility, sternness, originality, naked force,—all true splendour, or strength, arises from internal conviction or belief.

The poet was never compliant to the ways of the world from his very childhood he kept himself aloof: he nursed his visions in solitude, and soothed his haughty hopes of future loftiness of fame by lonely musing: the ideal world in which his mind lived would not coalesce with the rude concourse of mankind.

As to his own purity and sanctity of soul, the declarations and enthusiastic apostrophes in his own prose writings render it impossible to doubt it: he made them in the hearing of his most bitter enemies,—public enemies through all Europe,—rendered furious by a common cause, in which all the principles of ancient institutions were involved. The extent to which he carried his arguments appears to me wrong, and I cannot deem his conclusions other than harsh and vindictive; but, as I have said before, I do not think that tenderness of feeling was his distinction. His gigantic heart was not easily melted into tears: he knew how to paint rebellious angels, mighty even in their defeat.

All his excitements were intellectual: his thoughts were compound: but it is surprising how a mind habituated for twenty years to the coarse routine of public business could at once throw it all off, and produce a poetical texture so close-wrought, and of such unmingled majesty. Plain as the style is, it never sinks into colloquiality or the language of business: he had kept his genius aloof from his daily occupation, and suffered not the world to blow or breathe upon it.

In the commencement of the ninth book of the "Paradise Lost," the poet speaks of his subject as more heroic than the subjects of the Iliad and Æneid ·—

> If answerable style I can obtain
> Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
> Her nightly visitation unimplored,

And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse,
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleased me, long chusing and beginning late;
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deem'd.

So before, in book vii., addressing himself to his Muse Urania, he says:—

Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute: though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
And solitude: yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east. Still govern thou my song,
Urania: and fit audience find, though few.

That his inward light became more radiant from his outward darkness I cannot doubt. This he expresses himself in the sublime opening of his third book:—

Thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovereign vital lamp: but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene hath quench'd their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt,
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill;
Smit with the love of sacred song. But chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
Those other two equall'd with me in fate,
So were I equall'd with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old.
Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of eve or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off; and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with an universal blank
Of nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

There is nothing in all the materials of biography more applicable to an author's character than this affecting and majestic burst of egotism; though it will be repeated in the poetry, I should consider myself worse than tasteless if I omitted to insert it here.

If we do not dwell on these parts of the poet's thoughts and feelings, we pass over his principal and most exalted traits. The metrical writer, whose life is not a poem, is of an inferior class, and a mere poetical artist. No assumed character,—nothing, which does not proceed from "a believing mind" (to use Collins's expression), will be efficient. Milton, while he was composing "Paradise Lost," battled with the angels, and lived in the garden of Eden. While he was dictating the passages I have cited, how unutterably grand must have been the exaltation of his mind!

Great pains have been taken to discover what is called the origin of "Paradise Lost." Such conjectures may amuse the curious in bibliography; for higher purposes they are but empty trifles. The great number of authors, to whom it is pretended to track the poet, is alone a proof how little certainty there is in such researches. It appears to me that those critics mistake the nature of originality. It is not so much in the novelty of the ingredients, as in their selection and new combinations, that originality consists.

In confirmation of what the poet has said of his "long chusing, and beginning late," he thus expresses himself in his second book of the "Reformation of Church Government," in 1641:—

"Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him towards the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine; like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amorist, or the trencher fury of some rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained of dame Memory and her siren daughters; but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs."

I am convinced that this is the only true account of the origin of "Paradise Lost." Shakspeare's originality might be still more impugned, if an anticipation of hints and similar stories were to be taken as a proof of plagiarism. In many of the dramatist's most beautiful plays the whole tale is borrowed, as for instance, "Romeo and Juliet" from Luigi da Porto: but Shakspeare and Milton turn brass into gold. This sort of passage-hunting has been carried a great deal too far, and has disgusted and repelled the reader of feeling and taste. The novelty is in the raciness, the life, the force, the just association, the probability, the truth; that which is striking because it is extravagant, is a false novelty. He who borrows to make patches is a plagiarist; but what patch is there in Milton? All is interwoven, and forms part of one web.

No doubt, the holy bard was always intent upon sacred poetry, and drew his principal inspirations from Scripture. This distinguishes his style and spirit from those of all other poets; and gives him a solemnity which has not been surpassed save in the Book whence welled that inspiration.

The poem is one which could not have been produced solely by the genius of Milton, without the addition of an equal extent and depth of learning, and an equal labour of reflection. Neither Shakspeare, nor Spenser, nor any other great poet, of any country, could have produced it. It is never an effusion. I conjecture that it was produced slowly, after long musing on each passage; though he hints otherwise himself. It has always a great compression. Perhaps its perpetual allusions to all past literature and history are sometimes carried a little too far for the popular reader; and the latinised style requires to be read with the attention due to an ancient classic.

Probably all the author's diversified mental faculties and acquirements worked together in the production of almost every portion of this majestic edifice. There is nothing of mere simple imagination in any part: all is moral, didactic, wise, sublime, as well as creative and visionary.

All language appears diluted in every other poet, compared with Milton's: it has few transpositions: and is never guilty of flowery ornaments, which vulgar taste mistakes for poetical richness. Serious, profound, devoted, gigantic in conception, and sublime in words, he speaks as an inspired emanation of a higher state of being! There is a sombre awe in him, to which we listen as to an oracle. He dictates and imposes a force of authority, which we dare not question. We tremble while we believe.

In the Life which I have thus attempted of the most sublime of all English authors, it has not been my purpose to be minute, and to collect together all which had been previously told of the great poet.

It has seemed to me on the present occasion even judicious to adhere to the leading features only; and to give them, not from the representations of others, but from my own feelings, reflections, and convictions. I am afraid that there are many who admire Milton, principally, if not solely, upon the force of authority. All the admi-

over. These passages are all worked off with so much art, that they are capable of pleasing the most delicate reader, without offending the most severe:—

That day I oft remember, when from sleep, &c.

A poet of less judgment and invention than this great author would have found it very difficult to have filled these tender parts of the poem with sentiments proper for a state of innocence; to have described the warmth of love, and the professions of it, without artifice or hyperbole; to have made the man speak the most endearing things, without descending from his natural dignity, and the woman receiving them without departing from the modesty of her character; in a word, to adjust the prerogative of wisdom and beauty, and make each appear to the other in its proper force and loveliness. This mutual subordination of the two sexes is wonderfully kept up in the whole poem, as particularly on the speech of Eve I have before mentioned, and upon the conclusion of it; when the poet adds that the devil turned aside with envy at the sight of so much happiness, v. 492, &c."

Of all the difficulties Milton had to overcome, the greatest seems to me to have been the description of the battle of the angels in the sixth book; because he was necessitated to resort to material agency. It is founded on Rev. xii. 7, 8—"There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." Bishop Newton says, "within the compass of this one book we have all the variety of battles that can well be conceived. We have a single combat, and a general engagement: the first day's fight is with darts and swords, in imitation of the ancients: the second day's fight is with artillery, in imitation of the moderns; but the images in both are raised proportionately to the superior nature of the beings here described: and when the poet has briefly comprised all that has any foundation in fact and reality, he has recourse to the fiction of the poets in their description of the giants' war with the gods. And,

When war hath thus performed what war can do,

he rises still higher, and the Son of God is sent forth, in the majesty of the Almighty Father, agreeably to Scripture; so much doth the sublimity of Holy Writ transcend all that is true, and all that is feigned in description."

In the following passages, Addison rises to a sublimity, which assuredly has never, in any criticism, been surpassed:—"It required great pregnancy of invention, and strength of imagination, to fill this battle with such circumstances as should raise and astonish the mind of the reader; and at the same time, an exactness of judgment to avoid every thing that might appear light or trivial. Those who look into Homer, are surprised to find his battles still rising one above another, and improving in horror to the end of the Iliad. Milton's fight of angels is wrought up with the same beauty: it is ushered in with such signs of wrath as are suitable to Omnipotence incensed. The first engagement is carried on under a cope of fire, occasioned by the flights of innumerable burning darts and arrows which are discharged from either host. The second onset is still more terrible, as it is filled with those artificial thunders which seem to make the victory doubtful, and produce a kind of consternation even in the good angels. This is followed by the tearing up of mountains and promontories; till in the last place Messiah comes forth in the fulness of majesty and terror. The pomp of his appearance, amidst the roarings of his thunders, the flashings of his lightnings, and the noise of his chariot-wheels, is described with the utmost flights of human imagination.

"There is nothing on the first and last day's engagement which does not appear natural, and agreeable enough to the ideas most readers would conceive of a fight between two armies of angels.

"The second day's engagement is apt to startle an imagination which has not been raised and qualified for such a description by the reading of the ancient poets, and of Homer in particular. It was certainly a very bold thought in our author to ascribe the first use of artillery to the rebel angels: but as such a pernicious invention may be well supposed to have proceeded from such authors, so it entered very properly into the thoughts of that being, who is all along described as aspiring to the majesty of his Maker. Such engines were the only instruments he could have made use of to imitate those thunders that, in all poetry, both sacred and profane, are represented as the arms of the Almighty. The tearing up of hills was not alto-

gether so daring a thought as the former: we are in some measure prepared for such an incident by the description of the giants' war, which we meet with in many of the ancient poets. What still made this circumstance the more proper for the poet's use, is the opinion of many learned men, that the fable of the giants' war, which makes so great a noise in antiquity, and gave birth to the sublimest description in Hesiod's works, was an allegory founded upon this very tradition of a fight between the good and bad angels.

"Milton has taken everything that is sublime from the Latin and Greek poets in the giants' wars, and composes out of them the following great image:—

From their foundations loosening to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills with all their load,—
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands.

"Milton has likewise raised his description in this book with many images taken out of the poetical parts of Scripture. The Messiah's chariot is formed upon a vision of Ezekiel, who, as Grotius observes, has very much in him of Homer's spirit in the poetical parts of his prophecy. The lines, in that glorious commission which is given the Messiah, to extirpate the host of rebel angels, are drawn from a sublime passage in the Psalms. The reader will easily discover many other strokes of the same nature.

"As Homer has introduced into his battle of the gods every thing that is great and terrible in nature, Milton has filled his fight of good and bad angels with all the like circumstances of horror. The shout of armies, the rattling of brazen chariots, the hurling of rocks and mountains, the earthquakes, the fire, the thunder, are all of them employed to lift up the reader's imagination, and give him a suitable idea of so great an action. With what art has the poet represented the whole body of the earth trembling even before it was created! ver. 218, &c. In how sublime and just a manner does he afterwards describe the orbed heaven shaking under the wheels of the Messiah's chariot, with that exception of the throne of God! Notwithstanding the Messiah appears clothed with so much terror and majesty, the poet has still found means to make his readers conceive an idea of him, beyond what he himself is able to describe, ver. 832, &c. In a word, Milton's genius, which was so great in itself, and so strengthened by all the helps of learning, appears in this book every way equal to his subject, which was the most sublime that could enter into the thoughts of a poet."

Speaking of the eighth book, which describes the creation of Adam and Eve, Addison says,—"These, and the like wonderful incidents in this part of the work, have in them all the beauties of novelty, at the same time that they have all the graces of nature: they are such as none but a great genius could have thought of: though, upon a perusal of them, they seem to rise of themselves, from the subject of which he treats. In a word, though they are natural, they are not obvious; which is the true character of all fine writing." *

In the tenth book, upon the arrival of Sin and Death into the works of the Creation, he observes: "The following passage, ver. 641, &c., is formed upon that glorious image in Holy Writ, which compares the voice of an innumerable host of angels uttering hallelujahs to the voice of mighty thunderings, or of many waters." He continues:—

"Though the author, in the whole course of his poem, particularly in the book we are now examining, has infinite allusions to places of Scripture, I have only taken notice in my remarks of such as are of a poetical nature, and which are woven with great beauty into the body of this fable: of this kind is that passage in the present book, where, describing Sin as marching through the works of nature, he adds,

———— Behind her Death,
Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse:

which alludes to that passage in Scripture, so wonderfully poetical, and terrifying to the imagination:—'And I looked, and beheld a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with sickness, and with the beasts of the earth.'"

* Johnson has borrowed this in speaking of Gray's Elegy.

If we receive any pleasure from these stimulative compositions, they work us into a factitious fury, which unfits us for the sober business of life. We retire from the holy strains of Milton, improved in wisdom, fortified against the ills of existence, patient in adversity, and glorying in the works of the Creator. His enthusiasm is always philosophical.

Many will think me too severe in the application of the theory I have adopted, because it will degrade into a much lower class several of their favourite poets. They may still regard them with affection, for they may still afford them refined pleasures; but we must not put their pretensions on false grounds. He cannot strictly deserve the name of poet, who is not an inventor or creator; and he who does not admire Milton to enthusiasm, does not know what poetry is: he may delude himself, but the test is infallible. Mean and dull minds love the worst poets most, or, rather, those smooth versifiers who have no poetry in them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON "PARADISE REGAINED."

There is less complex fable in the "Paradise Regained" than in its predecessor; it is chiefly argumentative, while the other is narrative, dramatic, and full of imagery; but it is scarcely less sublime, if we may allow of argumentative sublimity. It has far more of the moral and practical wisdom, which relates to the state of mankind after the Fall, and therefore affords more lessons of instruction. It has less of the blaze of the sun, but more of the mellow mildness of its setting radiance: it has, however, enough of fable in it, in the poetical sense: the characters are few, and the language, for the most part, subdued and plain: the sentiments are abundant, wise, elevated, and beautiful. Here the poet is more profuse, and more rich, even than in the "Paradise Lost." I cannot bring myself to admit that there is less genius or less excellence in this poem than in the other. If fable were the only grand essence of poetry, then I must yield. Imagery implies materiality and embodiment: so far it is less splendid; but my own taste leads me to the intellectual, the spiritual, the ideal. This may allow of fable, as well as what is more narrative; yet it cannot be denied that there is less invention in the "Paradise Regained:" the story being singular, there was less opportunity for it. Milton had, in the second book of his Reason of Church Government, long before hinted that the rules of Aristotle were not always strictly to be kept; but rather nature to be followed; and that the Book of Job might be considered as "a brief model of an epic poem."

However we may rebel against the principles of Aristotle, when they are arbitrary, we must consider the greater part of them to be built on nature and truth: and so far not to be departed from. Fiction, therefore, whether imaginative or spiritual, is indispensable to poetry. For this reason, history in metre is not poetry; nor is the narrative of what is drawn from observation poetry.

I am fully aware what will be the result of an adherence to these strict principles: it will exclude a great part of what has taken to itself the name of poetry. When a writer of verses speaks in his own person, and describes, not his visionary, but his actual feelings and opinions, it is not poetry. We cannot lift ourselves up to the height of an invented character, because sad realities intervene to chill us.

Let us take the example of a popular author, and refer to Cowper's "Task." Here is no fable; here are no invented characters; it wants therefore a primary essential of the best poetry. Then why does it please?—because it is the language of poetry; because in his own person the author speaks the sentiments and tone of poetry. Still the one grand requisite is not there.

The same objection applies to the greater part of Cowley's works, except to the language, where there is often beautiful imagery. I believe nobody reads the "Davideis." There is no invented fable in Pope's "Eloisa:"—all that is borrowed either from biography or former fictions. All the charm lies in the animation, passion, and harmonious eloquence of the style and versification. The true poet surrounds himself with ideal worlds; he lives out of himself; he lives in others, but those others of his own creation. He escapes from realities to possibilities: but how few have strength of wing for this! Scarce any can long support themselves in the air: in those ethereal realms their wings soon droop beneath the heat. They are

willing to rest upon the earth, and be content with the solid substances around and before them. Appeals to the imagination, however, are not the less excellent because they are above the vulgar taste. Because there are those among the people whom something of fact pleases better than exalted fiction, is this fiction to be debased in the scale of excellence? We know not the mysteries of Providence, nor why this great poetical genius is so sparingly dispensed: we only know that upon this great scale all except four or five are found wanting. Poetical artists, whose skill lies in the mechanical parts, are numerous; the dress is a bauble; the creative thought is the essence. There is not much difficulty in finding language to illustrate a trite truth, and rhymes to give it harmony to the ear; but the combination of incidents, and exhibition of ideal characters, is another affair.

I have already said that we have scarcely any Epics in our language subsequent to Milton's, except the mean and miserable flatnesses of Blackmore · perhaps, however, a few modern poems may come under the denomination; as Southey's "Joan of Arc," "Madoc," and "Roderic," and some of Scott's and Byron's productions; but Scott's are more lyrical, and many of Byron's Tales incline to this. They want the regularity of the old heroic poem: the characters, too, are not quite natural. Gray's "Bard" may be called a fable: but if it be, it is a lyrical fable.

After the choice of subjects executed by Milton, all others fade into littleness. This is one of the difficulties which he has thrown upon his successors. The actors and the machinery from human materials must appear comparatively uninteresting. We may invent some great hero; but how spiritless will he appear before Satan! and how mean, before Adam and Eve, will all other human beings show themselves!

Still something might be done better than has been done; at once natural, vigorous, and new. We may imagine characters distinctly discriminated, moral, intellectual, generous, bold, enterprising, lofty; and we may put them into a progression of movements, wading through conflicting obstacles, and going forwards to some great end. We may borrow these from no history, nor derive much from observation—the whole may be invention; yet we may keep close to the probabilities of nature, but nature sublimed by virtue, and high inborn endowments.

This will free us from the servile task of copying from actual examples, which freezes the energies of the mind, and binds us down in chains to the earth; because we can always imagine more than we can find, and conceive ideal virtue higher than any which experience justifies. So of ideal beauty:—we can embody visions of fairness and purity, such as no individual ever possessed.

But to invent single characters is not so impracticable, as to make several so invented act their parts in one story, and have their respective qualities drawn out by the conflict. "*Hic labor, hoc opus est.*" A short poem, delineating a single character, real or imaginary, does but little. Prior's "Henry and Emma" goes a little farther, but the fable is not his own: he has merely given a modern versification to the dialogue. As far as it goes, it is very beautiful. Gray's "Elegy" is a soliloquy, and not of an ideal person. Not one of Dryden's Fables is original.

It is remarkable that the style of the "Paradise Regained" is much less encumbered with allusions to abstruse learning than the "Paradise Lost." Different critics assign different reasons for this. It is probable that the poet was influenced by regard to the simple language of the New Testament: in previous parts of the Bible there is much more of poetical ornament and figurative richness.

It is probable also that the latter poem was written more hastily, and less laboured. As to much imagery,—though a splendid charm, when just and grand, or beautiful, —it is not an essential of poetry. There may be invention, which is not in its strict sense imaginative: it may be purely intellectual and spiritual.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF MILTON'S JUVENILE POEMS.

It appears that Milton, from the first verses he composed, always tended to sacred subjects, and was always familiar with the style and images of the Scripture: he had early the idea of an epic poem; but his first productions were short and lyrical: in these the invention lay in the sentiments and language: he was always picturesque, and often sublime: his "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are almost

entirely descriptive, though there is something of a distinct character in those descriptions as applicable to different states of mind. Here he speaks mainly in his own person, and consonant to his own individual taste: I think, however, that there is less originality in these than in most of his other poems.

"Comus" is the invention of a beautiful fable, enriched with shadowy beings and visionary delights: every line and word is pure poetry, and the sentiments are as exquisite as the images. It is a composition which no pen but Milton's could have produced; though Shakspeare could have written many parts of it, yet with less regularity, and, of course, less philosophical thought and learning; less profundity and solemnity; but perhaps with more buoyancy and transparent flow.

"Lycidas" stands alone: Johnson says it has no passion; the passion results from the imaginative richness: the bursts of picturesque imagery give a melancholy rapture to a sensitive fancy. But Johnson had no fancy. It is like entering into an enchanted forest, where the wood-nymphs are mourning over their loves in strains of aerial music; or approaching a fairy island, where the sea-nymphs are singing melodious dirges from its promontories.

Johnson's censure of Milton for representing himself and Lycidas as shepherds, would go to destroy all figurative language. A shepherd's, as long as poetry has been known, has been considered a poetical life: his conversance with the fields and open air, joined to his leisure, connects itself with all picturesque imagery. The Scriptures would have afforded the critic an authority which one should have supposed he would have respected; as, for instance, the beautiful adaptation of Addison, beginning

> The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
> And feed me with a shepherd's care.

But Johnson had an abhorrence of a rural abode: with him "the full tide of life was at Charing Cross." He preferred the roll of the hackney coach, and the cries of London, to the sound of the woodman's axe, the shepherd's halloo, and the echo of the deep-mouthed hounds ringing from some forest slope; and the witticisms of aldermen in waistcoats of scarlet and gold at the full-clad table of Thrale the brewer, to dreams by the side of murmuring rivers, or a book in some shade, with the greenery of nature at his feet.

It it not true that there is no grief in "Lycidas;" but grief shows itself in different minds according as they are differently constructed. An imaginative mind does not grieve in the same way as a sterile one: it is not stunned; it expatiates abroad: it dwells on all the scenes in which it has been associated with the object of its loss. If it is full of tears, those tears are gilded by hope: but Johnson looked to death only with a sullen gloom; he saw no bright emanations of joy playing in the skies: with him it was, that

> Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled.—COLLINS.

Johnson prefers Cowley's "Elegy on his friend W. Hervey," on account of its plain unmetaphorical language. Why did he not mention that of Tickell on Addison, where he speaks of their walking and conversing in consecrated groves? The critic says there is no nature in "Lycidas," for there is no truth; no art, for there is nothing new. This I do not understand; a proper novelty is the result of genius, not of art. But the assertion that there is no novelty in this composition is not just: the imagery and the combinations are all new: raciness is one of its beautiful characteristics: it is full of imagery; but principally primal, not metaphorical imagery. "Lycidas" appears to me much more vigorous, more expansive, more vivid, more full of sentiment and intellectuality, than "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," which are the popular favourites.

It is extraordinary that Johnson had the courage to venture such a disreputable criticism; but he was now in the height of his fame, and had grown humoursome and arbitrary. His contemporaries feared his vituperation and personal invectives. The Wartons were mild men, and loved too much their own quiet:* Mason lived at a distance from him, and abhorred and feared him: Gray was dead: Johnson's club were all his flatterers and worshippers: Burke was absorbed in politics: and Sir Joshua Reynolds never ventured to engage in literary conflict with him. A few feeble missiles were aimed at him by Potter and other mediocrists; but it was a crisis

* As T. Warton's book appeared in 1785, he probably composed his remarks soon after the "Lives" were published in 1781. Whether he would have printed them while the Doctor lived, may be a question.

of no brilliance: Hayley became a fashionable poet; and Beattie lost his spirits, and could not carry the "Minstrel" beyond the second canto: Robertson and Gibbon were great in history; but they did not much concern themselves with poetry: Sir William Jones was yet young, vain, and ambitious to go with the stream: Horace Walpole was too delicate, and too fearful of the rude ridicule of Johnson, to enter the lists with him; nor probably would his taste have led him to it: I doubt whether Milton's genius had much of his sympathy.

In this age, such an ebullition of vulgar acrimony and hard insensibility would not have been left unassailed and unrepelled. The Southeys, the Lockharts, the Wordsworths, the Wilsons, the Campbells, the Moores, and many an unfleshed sword besides, would all have stepped forth. The flattering Thrales, and Boswells, and Hawkinses, and Murphys, would have had no shield.

I do not know how Cowper felt: he had not yet broke forth into fame, and perhaps was too meek to have then dared an opinion of his own; but he has left many proofs that he was a devoted admirer of Milton. I was a boy when the Life of Milton came out; though the Lives of the more modern poets appeared after I arrived at Cambridge; and then my indignation at the attacks on Collins and Gray rose to a height which has never since subsided.

CHAPER XXV.

ON MILTON'S SONNETS.

The Sonnets are another object of Johnson's virulent attack: they have a character of their own, supported for the most part by a naked majesty of thought. The model is drawn from the Italians; and Milton's favourite, Dante, set him the example. He took little from the tone of Petrarch: he has none of Petrarch's sweetness. The sternness, severity, gloominess, and sublimity of Dante had his entire sympathy. The English reader may find specimens of Dante's manner in his Sonnets, excellently translated by Hayley, in the notes to his poem on Epic Poetry: I must admit that, in the Sonnets, Milton has not reached his model.

The brevity of the Sonnet will scarcely admit the greater traits of poetry: there is no space for fable; but for the preservation of a single grand thought it is admirably fitted. Mr. Dyce, in his "Specimens of English Sonnets, from the time of Henry VIII., chronologically arranged," has shown their progress and their fashions. They were favourites with Spenser and Shakspeare, and many less eminent poets of those days; as Sydney, Constable, B. Barnes, Daniel, and Drayton. It appears to me that the Sonnets both of Spenser and Shakspeare have been commended too much: they are quaint, laboured, and often metaphysical. Of all authors, Wordsworth has most succeeded in this department.

But there are many of Milton's which are very grand in their nakedness: they have little of picturesque imagery. To make use once more of an expression of Johnson—not as applied to them, but to other parts of Milton—their sublimity is argumentative: it is intellectual and spiritual. There is something at times of ruggedness and involution in the words: they rarely flow. They are spoken as by one, who, conscious of the force of the thought, scorns ornament; they have something of the brevity and the dictatorial tone of the oracle, and seem to come from one who feels conscious that he is entitled to authority. Compositions so short can only have weight when they come from established names: every word ought to be pregnant with mind, with thought, sentiment, or imagery. The form will not allow diffuseness and smooth diluted periods: the repetition of the rhymes certainly aggravates the difficulty.

If it can be shown that in any one of these Sonnets of Milton there is not much sterling ore, I will give it up. In all there is some important thought, or opinion, or sentiment developed. The modulation may sometimes appear rough to delicate and sickly ears; and there is not the nice polish of a lady's gem come from a refining jeweller's workshop: it is all massy gold,—not filagreed away into petty ornaments.

The Sonnet on Cromwell is majestic;—on his blindness, sublime;—on his twenty-second birth-day, both pathetic and exalted: others are moral and axiomatic; and others descriptive. Not one is a mere effusion of idle words or insipid commonplace; not one has the appearance of being written for the sake of writing.

The necessity of compression gives this form of composition a great merit, when the fountain of the writer's mind is abundant. It is true, that in this short space, barrenness itself can find enough to fill up the outline; but in Milton there is no unmeaning sentence or useless word. The form of the Sonnet, however, does not refuse mellifluousness when the occasion requires, as Petrarch almost everywhere proves. No verses can be more mellifluous than Petrarch's: something of this will perhaps be attributed to the softness of the Italian language; but the English tongue is also capable of it, however obstinately Johnson may have pronounced otherwise. Milton had no Laura to flatter and idolise: he found in his wife a dull, insensate, and capricious woman, unwarmed by his genius, and inapprehensive of his moral qualities: his admiration turned to disgust, and his resentment to bitterness. One may conceive that his genius might have thrown more of the splendour of imagination into his Sonnets: single images, such as are scattered through all the rest of his poetry, might have been thrown into a succession of these small forms, and might have risen by a noble climax to their termination.

If there was one poetical power of Milton more eminent than another, it was his power of description; he gave an idealism to all his material images; and yet they were in the highest degree distinct and picturesque. He knew where to throw a veil, and when to make the features prominent. A poetical image should have the distinctness which a painter can depict; but it should have also something of the indefinite, which a painter cannot depict:—this is Milton's merit; and it is no less that of Dante. It is what art can never reach: what genius only gives by flashes: it is enthusiasm and inspiration.

The question at present is, not whether the Sonnets are equal to Milton's genius, but whether they are good, or as contemptible as Johnson represents them. I say that they are such as none but Milton could have written: they are full of lofty thought, moral instruction, and virtuous sentiment, expressed in language as strong as it is plain. They are pictures of a manly, resolute, inflexible spirit, and aid us in our knowledge of the poet's individual character. Is this light merit?—Where is the enlightened reader who will agree with Johnson, and wish them thrown aside?

But Johnson's prejudices against Milton were inveterate: they must have been taken up early in life from some passion, and have grown with his growth. He never ridded himself of the impressions he imbibed from Lauder: his hatred, however, was partly political. I know not what made him so bigoted and blind a partisan: his birth and station will not account for it;—probably it was imbibed jacobitism. But there was something adverse in the native structure of the minds of these two celebrated men: if Johnson had genius, it was quite dissimilar to that of Milton: it was solely argumentative: he had no inventive imagination: he saw no phantoms but the gloomy phantoms of superstition: he had no chivalrous enthusiasm: he delighted not to gaze on feudal halls, or "throngs of knights and barons bold:" he thought not of another world; of angels, and heavenly splendour, but as subjects of trembling and painful awe! He turned away from them, except so far as duty enforced his attention; he loved the world, and all its gaieties, and follies, and conflicts.

Could there be a greater contrast to the bard of "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained"? To him who would decapitate kings, and defy the powers of the earth? To him who would haunt groves and forests, and listen to the lonely blast, and busy himself in deep solitude, and love musing and his own creations, rather than the busy talk of social collision? Him, whose taste is opposed to our own, and from its elevation claims a superiority, we learn first to envy, then to hate, then to scorn. Till we can persuade ourselves that he is in the wrong, we feel our own degradation. Thus Johnson, when he was grasping at the head seat of the literature of his country, could not bear the memory of one whose dissimilar splendour paled his own; hence his constant detractions, his petty cavils, his malignant perversions.

To dwell on this topic is not idle or irrelevant: Johnson still holds the public ear; and to endeavour to weaken his influence is a duty neither useless nor ungenerous. The more the public studies and admires Milton, the higher will be its taste and grasp of intellect. As to the Sonnets, if any one can read them without both pleasureable excitation and improvement, he has a sort of mind which it would be vain to attempt to cultivate—a barren soil, or one overgrown with weeds and prejudices.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON "SAMSON AGONISTES."

We come again to fable and invention. "Samson Agonistes" is written after the severe model of the ancient Greek tragedies; but it is not fit for the stage, nor intended for it: the characters are few; it indeed almost approaches to a monologue. Many object to the Chorus; but for a dramatic poem it affords many opportunities of noble eloquence. Samson's character is magnificently supported: he is a giant in mind as well as in body: his language, though not suited to the effeminate polish of modern ears, is vigorous and majestic.

There is a deep pathos, but unyielding soul, in all the hero utters: the moral reflections are grand, profound, and expansive. The application everywhere to the poet's own misfortunes and position augments the interest twofold.

Milton, in his preface to this poem, says:—"Tragedy, as it was anciently composed, had been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems; therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions; that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated," &c.

On this Warton makes the following note:—"Milton, who was inclined to puritanism, had good reason to think that the publication of his 'Samson Agonistes' would be very offensive to his brethren, who held poetry, and particularly that of the dramatic kind, in the greatest abhorrence: and upon that account, it is probable, that in order to excuse himself from having engaged in this proscribed and forbidden species of writing, he thought it expedient to prefix to his play a formal defence of tragedy." Such defence of what does not require to be defended never makes impression upon bigoted minds. The blind slaves of party are never convinced by reason; they repeat by rote, and cannot be put out of their lesson. Long speeches on the stage become tedious; but are not so to the intelligent reader: and there is no mode by which an ideal character can be represented with so much effect. A person under the influence of passion can best describe his own feelings: we cannot conceive anything more heroic than much of what is said by Samson.

In accordance with some celebrated critics, I have no doubt that the third place of excellence in Milton's works ought to be assigned to "Samson Agonistes"—placing the "Paradise Lost" first, and "Paradise Regained" second. Though "Comus" is exquisite poetry, it has not so much grandeur and holiness: it certainly is more purely imaginative; but then we must consider the compound of the four great essentials; and we must always prefer sublimity to sweetness. To live among the nymphs and dryads is delightful; but moral heroism is more delightful. One is duty; the other is only pleasure.

We are entitled to amuse ourselves by sometimes living in a purely visionary world; but sometimes also we are called upon to perform our part among the human inhabitants of the solid earth: and the grandeur of bold enterprise, or patient suffering, has a longer, deeper, and more instructive hold upon the mind, than any simple and unmixed play upon the fancy or the senses.

The "Comus" is the work of a younger man, full of hope, elasticity, and joy: the tragedy is the pouring out of one enriched by the wisdom of age and experience, mellowed by misfortune, and elevated by patience under danger and calumny:—of one "fallen on evil tongues and evil days;"—of one resolved to lift himself above sublunary oppression, and rising in grandeur in proportion to the severity of his trials. We muse in this tragedy upon the great bard mingling his ideal inventions with his own personal gloomy recollections and his present sorrows and privations. We trace the workings of his heroic spirit; and we see the sublime picture of lofty virtue and splendid genius "struggling with the storms of fate." The temperament of poetry is heat and exhalation: it throws out flashes, of which labour and art cannot supply scintillæ. Its warmth and tone communicate its contagion to others. Whatever there is of artificial and mechanical attempt to produce this effect on others, fails, and ends in nothing. It is like dead air, whence we draw no healthful breath. No one can write with the powers of a poet except when he is in a state of excitement. All must be centred within him:—there the fire must burn and blaze. He must see with the mental eye, and pore, and believe. Language will accompany

this state of spiritualism without being searched for. If the thought does not predominate over the expression, it is not only charmless, but weak and faulty :—

> Cold as the snow upon Canadian hills,
> It wakes no spark within, but chills the heart.

The spell comes from the imagination:—there can be no warmth in literary composition where there is no imagination.

The force and brightness of the fire is in proportion to the richness and abundance of the fuel applied to it. Milton applied all invention, all wisdom, all learning, and all knowledge.

Perhaps we must bring to the reading of Milton much greatness of spirit, a strong and unsophisticated fancy—much erudition, and much power of thought, to enable us thoroughly to taste and admire him. In this he differs from Shakspeare, who is equally fitted for the people and for the most radiant and most cultivated minds. One can scarcely deny that this is a superiority in Shakspeare: Milton could not have been what he was without the aid of intense study; but as Milton could not have done what Shakspeare did, so Shakspeare could not have done what Milton did. To have produced "Samson Agonistes" would have been utterly beyond Shakspeare's reach: Shakspeare, however, would have given more variety of characters, and richness and contrast of incidents: he would have drawn Dalilah more inviting, and Samson more tender: his language would have been more flowing—more vernacular; and if not so sublime, more beautiful: it would have sunk with less consideration, and more immediately into people's hearts—"Samson Agonistes" is for study, and not to be lightly perused. But let no scholar—let no magnanimous-souled being, who understands the English language, and has any tincture of education, omit to read it, and muse upon it again and again, and lay it up in the treasured stores of his memory: it will exercise and improve all his intellectual faculties, and elevate his heart:—it has at once novelty, truth, and wisdom. He may learn by it lessons for the great affairs of life, enlarge his comprehension, and fortify his bosom. He may be taught that sublimity and strength of language lie not in glitter or floweriness;—that strength is naked, and boldness of conception can support itself.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE thus given my opinion distinctively of Milton's epic, dramatic, and lyrical genius. I have done it sincerely, without exaggeration, and, after a habit of considering the subject for many years, with an earnest desire to form a right judgment.

To praise upon mere authority can answer no good purpose; the repetition of false praise will add to its nauseousness: but there can be no certainty of merit, unless we strictly establish principles which shall become a test to it. The endless diversity of capricious opinion puts every thing afloat: we can trust to nothing but the concurrence of all ages and all nations. If, therefore, we find that what was laid down by Aristotle has received the sanction of posterity under all changes of manners and varieties of countries, reason enjoins us to rely upon it as truth: I take, therefore, Aristotle's four requisites of good poetry to be undeniable. By these rules Milton must ever stand where he has been placed—at the head of his art, if art it may be called. But the extraordinary thing is, that he has no second in this combination of merits,—that he stands alone! There are those whom this will offend; but it is the stern truth. If fable, in the sense in which Aristotle uses it, is a necessary essential, the conclusion is incontrovertible.

Of all the fifty-two poets whose Lives have been written by Johnson, and of whom not less than seventeen are mere versifiers, and several of them mediocre versifiers, —Dryden and Pope stand, in common estimation, next to Milton. But however I may sin against the popular opinion, I persevere in saying that they are deficient in this first essential, to which I have alluded: I assert that they have no poetical invention. Pope's "Rape of the Lock" will scarcely be objected to me; nor Dryden's "Fables," which are all borrowed. Sir William Temple's observation of the rarity of poetical genius, so often cited, is thus verified. Single qualities may not be uncommon: it is the union of all the essentials which so seldom occurs. Milton had them all; and each in the most eminent degree. Pope may be said to have had the last three: Dryden wanted the first, and perhaps the third.

So far as poetry is to be considered not only the voice of pleasure, but the voice of wisdom, whatever fiction is contrary to probability, is not only not praiseworthy, but culpable. It justly brings poetry into contempt, and gives it the name of an idle, empty art. I prefer even insipidity and triteness to extravagance; the effort to surprise is always vicious. The poet's business is to exhibit nature, but nature in an exalted state: hence I cannot approve Crabbe's poetry, however true to life his descriptions may be. On the other hand, I must admit that Byron in his fictions goes sometimes far beyond nature. These are small names, even the last, to mention after Milton, whose fables utter the songs of angels and archangels; and whose sanctity, elevated into the highest sublimity, keeps due music with the choirs of Heaven! Not but Byron might, if he had been equally devout, have followed Milton in this track.

I am conscious what talents far above mine it requires to treat adequately the subject I have here undertaken: but others, as weak as I am, have already entered on the task with less respectfulness and less love, and I am willing to attempt to wipe away some of the stains they have left. For fifty years I have had an unquenchable desire to refute Johnson's perverse criticisms and malignant obloquies. I know not by what spell his authority over the public is still great. To almost every new edition of Milton, except Todd's and Mitford's, Johnson's Life of the Poet has continued to be reprinted. This repetition surely becomes nauseous.

But he who gains novelty at the expense of truth, pays too dear for it; and gains what is not worth having. Nothing is more easy than to stimulate for a moment by what is new, though unfounded: but sobriety of judgment, and nicety of taste, must give their sanction to what is pronounced. All inconsiderate and unmeasured praise is hurtful. I have foreborne to commend any composition of this mighty poet without long and calm thought. I have considered that the powers of Johnson entitled him to a cool and careful consideration before I ought to venture to contradict his opinion; but that, when I could no longer doubt, no force of authority ought to restrain my expression.

But much greater authority than Johnson's on a poetical question is on my side:—Dryden, Addison, Gray, the Wartons, Cowper, Hayley, and innumerable others.

It would be almost superfluous to say more of Milton's merits as a poet, after all that I have said: recapitulation in his case would probably weaken its effect. He had not only every requisite of the Muse; but every one of the highest order, and in the highest degree. His invention of poetical fable, and poetical imagery, was exhaustless, and always grand, and always consistent with the faith of a cultivated and sensitive mind. Sublimity was his primary and unfailing power. His characters were new, surprising, gigantic, or beautiful; and full of instruction, such as high wisdom sanctioned. His sentiments were lofty, comprehensive, eloquent, consistent, holy, original; and an amalgamation of spirit, religion, intellect, and marvellous learning. His language was his own: sometimes a little rough and unvernacular; but as magnificent as his mind: of pregnant thought; naked in its strength; rich and picturesque, where imagery was required; often exquisitely harmonious, where the occasion permitted: but sometimes strong, mighty, and speaking with the voice of thunder.

I can scarcely go further, to constitute the greatest poet of our nation, and, in my opinion, of the world: for surely, taking dignity of fable and other characters into the question, Homer and Virgil cannot be compared with Milton! And, to fortify me, Addison and Dryden have come to the same conclusion.

In moral character the poet stands among the noblest and the best. His spirit was as holy, and his heart as sanctified as his writings: for this we must admit the testimony of his own repeated declaration in the face of malignant enemies, and the foulest passion of detraction. But, as humanity cannot be perfect, he was provoked by diabolical slander into recriminations unbecoming the dignity of his supreme genius, and devout heart. His politics were severe, and, in my apprehension, wrong; but they were conscientious. The principles which he entertained, the boldness of his mind pushed to an unlimited and terrible extent: and thus he was brought to justify the decapitation of Charles I. I would forget this, if I could; because, remembering it, I cannot but confess that I feel it a cloud upon his dazzling glory: but as Horsley said on another occasion:—

> One passing vapour shall dissolve away,
> And leave thy glory's unobstructed ray!

APPENDIX.

No. I.

MEMORANDA RELATING TO THE FAMILY OF POWELL OF FOREST-HILL, OXFORDSHIRE.

"Milton married, in 1643, a daughter of Justice Powell of Sandford, in the vicinity of Oxford, and lived in a house at Forest-hill, about three miles from Oxford."

TODD'S LIFE OF MILTON, vol. i. p. 25, ed. 1809.

NOTHING can possibly be more erroneous. The families of Powell, alias ap Howell, of Sandford, and Powell of Forest-hill, were not in the remotest degree connected: the former were Roman Catholics. Milton's first wife was Mary, daughter of Richard Powell of Forest-hill. About twenty years ago, the writer, being strongly impressed with the incorrectness of the above statement, and residing for a few months at Oxford, compiled a pedigree of the family of Powell of Sandford, by which the fact is proved to demonstration. There were then no memorials of the family in the church of Forest-hill; and the earliest register commencing A. D. 1700, no notice respecting them could be gleaned from that source. It is probable they came gradually into prosperity under the wings of the Bromes. One Richard Powell is "remembered" as a "servant" (perhaps bailiff or steward) under the will of George Brome of Halton, and is mentioned before the testator's armourer.

Richard Powell of Forest-hill, and Sir Edward Master of Ospringe, in Kent, were executors under the will of George Brome's widow, Eliz. (made 8th September, 1629), proved February 6th, 1634–5.

The will of Edmund Brome of Forest-hill, made November 8th, 1625, was proved August 12th, 1628, by Richard Powell (sole executor), Milton's father-in-law. There is no pedigree of the family to be met with; but the following are some memoranda respecting the will of Richard Powell of Forest-hill, Esq., made December 30th, 1646, proved March 26th, 1647, by his widow, Anne; and on May 10th, 1662, by his son Richard; by which act the effect of the power so given to the mother was done away with. One of the attesting witnesses was John Milton, his son-in-law; but the original will not being now (1831) at Doctors' Commons, curiosity will be disappointed in the expectation of seeing the poet's handwriting.

The testator names as executor, in the first place, his eldest son Richard; and in the second, in case of said Richard's unwillingness to act, his wife Anne: and in the third place, in case of said Anne being unwilling to do so, his friend Mr. John Ellstone of Forest-hill, to whom he gives twenty shillings for a ring. He appoints as overseers his loving friends Sir John Curson and Sir Robert Pye, Knights, and gives to them twenty shillings each for a ring.

He devises his house, &c., at Forest-hill (alias Forsthall), and alludes to his recently compounding for the same at Goldsmiths' Hall, to his eldest son Richard, subject, however, to as follows:—Payment of debts and funeral expenses, &c., satisfying a bond to Anne his, the testator's, wife, in reference to her jointure, and which the testator was not able at that period (1646) to discharge out of his personal property; and the remainder was then to be divided into two parts: one of them to belong to the said Richard, and the other to be divided among such of his brothers and sisters as might not have been already, at the time of the testator's decease, provided for; and the sisters to have one-third more apiece than their brothers.

The testator desires that his daughter, Milton, may be had regard to, as to the sufficiency of her portion; and more, if his, the testator's, estate will bear it.

His houses and lands at Wheatley, and all other properties of the testator, not so above specifically bequeathed, &c., are given to his said son Richard.

The marriage portion, £1000, promised to John Milton by his father-in-law, was never paid, according to the biographies of the poet. His distresses in the royal cause prevented, probably, the payment of it.

[I am indebted for this information to the kindness of Mr. Frederick Holbrooke of Parkhurst, Bexley.—ED.]

No. II.

DESCENDANTS OF MILTON *

"MILTON'S direct descendants can only exist, if they exist at all, among the posterity of his youngest and favourite daughter Deborah, afterwards Mrs. Clarke, a woman of cultivated understanding, and not unpleasing manners, known to Richardson and Professor Ward, and patronised by Addison, who intended to have procured a permanent provision for her, and presented with fifty guineas by Queen Caroline. Her affecting exclamation is well known, on seeing her father's portrait for the first time more than thirty years after his death:—'Oh, my father, my dear father!' 'She spoke of him,' says Richardson, 'with great tenderness; she said he was delightful company, the life of the conversation, not only by a flow of subject, but by unaffected cheerfulness and civility.' This is the character of him whom Dr. Johnson represents as a morose tyrant, drawn by one of the supposed victims of his domestic oppression.

"Her daughter, Mrs. Foster, for whose benefit Dr. Newton and Dr. Birch procured Comus to be acted, survived all her children. The only child of Deborah Milton, of whom we have any accounts besides Mrs. Foster, was Caleb Clarke, who went to Madras in the first years of the eighteenth century, and who then vanishes from the view of the biographers of Milton. We have been enabled, by accident, to enlarge a very little this appendage to his history. It appears from an examination of the parish register of Fort St. George, that Caleb Clarke, who seems to have been parish-clerk of that place, from 1717 to 1719, was buried there on the 26th of October of the latter year. By his wife Mary, whose original surname does not appear, he had three children born at Madras:—Abraham, baptized on the 2nd of June, 1703? Mary, baptized on the 17th of March, 1706, and buried on December the 15th of the same year; and Isaac, baptized the 13th of February, 1711. Of Isaac no further account appears. Abraham, the great-grandson of Milton, in September, 1725, married Anna Clarke; and the baptism of his daughter, Mary Clarke, is registered on the 2nd of April, 1727. With her all notices of this family cease. But as neither he nor any of his family, nor his brother Isaac, died at Madras, and as he was only twenty-four years of age at the baptism of his daughter, it is probable that the family migrated to some other part of India, and that some trace of them might yet be discovered by examination of the parish registers of Calcutta and Bombay. If they had returned to England, they could not have escaped the curiosity of the admirers and historians of Milton. We cannot apologise for the minuteness of this genealogy, or for the eagerness of our desire that it should be enlarged. We profess that superstitious veneration for the memory of that greatest of poets, which regards the slightest relic of him as sacred; and we cannot conceive either true poetical sensibility, or a just sense of the glory of England, to belong to that Englishman, who would not feel the strongest emotions at the sight of a descendant of Milton, discovered in the person even of the most humble and unlettered of human beings."†

No. III.

MILTON'S AGREEMENT WITH MR. SYMONS FOR "PARADISE LOST,"

DATED 27TH APRIL, 1667.

THESE Presents made the 27th day of April, 1667, between John Milton, Gent. of the one part, and Samuel Symons, printer, of the other part, wittness That the said John Milton in consideration of five pounds to him now paid by the said Samuel Symōns, and other the consideracōns herein mentioned, hath given, granted and assigned, and by these pñts doth give, grant and assign unto the said Samll Symons, his executors and assigns, All that Booke, Copy, or Manuscript of a Poem intituled Paradise Lost, or by whatsoever other title or name the same is or shall be called or distinguished, now lately licensed to be printed, together with the full benefitt,

* From a critique on Godwin's 'Lives of Milton's Nephews,' in Edinburgh Review, No. L.

† While the grandson of Milton resided at Madras, in a condition so humble as to make the office of parish-clerk an object of ambition, it is somewhat remarkable that the elder brother of Addison should have been the governor of that settlement. The Honourable Galston Addison died there in the year 1709.

profit, and advantage thereof, or w[ch] shall or may arise thereby. And the said John Milton for him, his ex[rs] and adm[rs], doth covenant w[th] the said Sam[ll] Symōns, his ex[rs] and ass[s], that he and they shall at all times hereafter have, hold and enjoy the same and all impressions thereof accordingly, without the lett or hindrance of him the said John Milton, his ex[rs] or ass[s], or any person or persons by his or their consent or privity. And that he the said John Milton, his ex[rs] or adm[rs], or any other by his or their meanes or consent, shall not print or cause to be printed, or sell, dispose or publish the said book or manuscript, or any other book or manuscript of the same tenor or subject, without the consent of the said Sam[ll] Symōns, his ex[rs] or ass[s]: In concideracōn whereof the said Sam[ell] Symōns for him, his ex[rs] and adm[rs], doth covenant with the said John Milton, his ex[rs] and ass[s], well and truly to pay unto the said John Milton, his ex[rs] and adm[rs], the sum of five pounds of lawfull english money at the end of the first Impression, which the said Sam[ll] Symōns, his ex[rs] or ass[s], shall make and publish of the said copy or manuscript, which impression shall be accounted to be ended when thirteen hundred books of the said whole copy or manuscript imprinted, shall be sold and retailed off to particular reading customers. And shall also pay other five pounds, unto the said John Milton or his ass[s], at the end of the second impression to be accounted as aforesaid, And five pounds more at the end of the third impression, to be in like manner accounted. And that the said three first impressions shall not exceed fifteen hundred books or volumes of the said whole copy or manuscript, a piece. And further, that he the said Samuel Symōns and his ex[rs], adm[rs], and ass[s] shall be ready to make oath before a Master in Chancery concerning his or their knowledge and belief of or concerning the truth of the disposing and selling the said books by retail, as aforesaid, whereby the said Mr. Milton is to be entitled to his said money from time to time, upon every reasonable request in that behalf, or in default thereof shall pay the said five pounds agreed to be paid upon every impression, as aforesaid, as if the same were due, and for and in lieu thereof. In witness whereof, the said parties have to this writing indented, interchangeably sett their hands and seales the day and yeare first above written.

JOHN MILTON. (Seal).

Sealed and delivered in the presence of us, } John Fisher. Benjamin Greene, serv[t] to Mr. Milton.

April 26, 1669.

Rec[d] then of Samuel Simmons five pounds, being the Second five pounds to be paid —mentioned in the Covenant. I say rec[d] by me,

Witness, Edmund Upton. JOHN MILTON.

I do hereby acknowledge to have received of Samuel Symōnds Cittizen and Stationer of London, the Sum of Eight pounds: which is in full payment for all my right, title or interest, which I have or ever had in the Coppy of a Poem Intitled Paradise Lost in Twelve Bookes in 8vo—By John Milton Gent. my late husband. Witness my hand this 21[st] day of December 1680.

Wittness, William Yopp, Ann Yopp. ELIZABETH MILTON.

Know all men by these psents that I Elizabeth Milton of London Widdow, late wife of John Milton of London Gent: deceased—have remissed released and for ever quitt claimed And by these psents doe remise release & for ever quitt clayme unto Samuel Symonds of London, Printer—his heirs Execut[rs] and Administrators All and all manner of Accoñ and Accoñs Cause and Causes of Accoñ Suites Bills Bonds writinges obligatorie Debts dues duties Accompts Summe and Sumes of money Judgments Executions Extents Quarrells either in Law or Equity Controversies and demands—And All and every other matter cause and thing whatsoever which against the said Samuel Symonds—I ever had and which I my heires Executers or Administrators shall or may have clayme & challenge or demand for or by reason or means of any matters cause or thing whatsoever from the beginning of the World unto the day of these psents. In witness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale the twenty-ninth day of April in the thirty-third Year of the Reigne of our Sovereign Lord Charles by the grace of God of England Scotland ffrance and Ireland King defender of the ffaith & Anno Dni. 1681. ELIZABETH MILTON.

Signed and delivered in the psence of JOS. LEIGH W[m]. WILKINS.

No. IV.

COWLEY'S PREFACE TO HIS POEMS, 1656.

It has been already observed that Cowley had scarcely opportunity to become acquainted with the early poems of Milton; and his party attachments prevented even a wish for personal intimacy; he was engaged besides on active, sometimes foreign service, and, if he read the "Defensio" of the great republican, in all probability read it with horror.

Yet we find on authority not to be questioned, that Milton spoke of Cowley as a poet whom he valued, and named him with Spenser and Shakspeare. This is the more surprising, as Cowley was by ten years the younger man, and his writings had never appeared in body till 1656, when he returned to England from the Continent, and published them in folio. This volume was, there can be no question, read to Milton in his blindness: the congeniality of their studies, and their religious feelings, led him to estimate highly the only rival that Cambridge had bred to him in Latin verse; and though unnoticed in the volume upon his table, the Preface spoke to him, as by the inspiration of Urania herself. Let the reader imagine the blind bard listening to the following exquisite admonitions, which he alone fully comprehended; and the expectations which of all mankind he only could gratify; and upon which he was then earnestly and silently meditating:

"When I consider how many bright and magnificent subjects the holy Scripture affords and proffers, as it were, to poesy, in the wise managing and illustrating whereof, the glory of God Almighty might be joined with the singular utility and noblest delight of mankind; it is not without grief and indignation that I behold that divine science employing all her inexhaustible riches of wit and eloquence, either in the wicked and beggarly flattery of great persons, or the unmanly idolizing of foolish women, or the wretched affectation of scurril laughter, or at best on the confused antiquated dreams of senseless fables and metamorphoses. Amongst all holy and consecrated things, which the devil ever stole and alienated from the service of the Deity; as altars, temples, sacrifices, prayers, and the like; there is none that he so universally, and so long usurped, as poetry. It is time to recover it out of the tyrant's hands, and to restore it to the kingdom of God, who is the father of it. It is time to baptize it in Jordan, for it will never become clean by bathing in the water of Damascus. There wants, methinks, but the conversion of that, and the Jews, for the accomplishment of the kingdom of Christ. And as men, before their receiving of the faith, do not without some carnal reluctancies apprehend the bonds and fetters of it, but find it afterwards to be the truest and greatest liberty; it will fare no otherwise with this art, after the regeneration of it: it will meet with wonderful variety of new, more beautiful, and more delightful objects; neither will it want room, by being confined to heaven. There is not so great a lie to be found in any poet, as the vulgar conceit of men, that lying is essential to good poetry. Were there never so wholesome nourishment to be had (but alas, it breathes nothing but diseases) out of these boasted feasts of love and fables; yet, methinks, the unalterable continuance of the diet should make us nauseate it: for it is almost impossible to serve up any new dish of that kind. They are all but the cold meats of the ancients, new-heated, and new set forth. I do not at all wonder that the old poets made some rich crops out of these grounds; the heart of the soil was not then wrought out with continual tillage: but what can we expect now, who come a gleaning, not after the first reapers, but after the very beggars? Besides, though those mad stories of the gods and heroes seem in themselves so ridiculous; yet they were in the whole body (or rather chaos) of the theology of those times. They were believed by all but a few philosophers, and perhaps some atheists, and served to good purpose among the vulgar (as pitiful things as they are), in strengthening the authority of law with the terrors of conscience, and expectation of certain rewards, and unavoidable punishments. There was no other religion; and therefore that was better than none at all: but to us, who have no need of them; to us, who deride their folly, and are wearied with their impertinencies; they ought to appear no better arguments for verse, than those of their worthy successors, the knights errant. What can we imagine more proper for the ornaments of wit or learning in the story of Deucalion than in that

"THE VERSE."

[The following is from the hand of the poet himself as it is short, I have given his own orthography*, peculiar in some points —ED]

"THE measure is English Heroick Verse without Rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin, Rime being no necessary Adjunct or true Ornament of Poem or good Verse, in longer Works especially, but the Invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter and lame Meeter; grac't indeed since by the use of some famous modern Poets, carried away by Custom, but much to thir own vexation, hindrance, and constraint, to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, then else they would have exprest them. Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish Poets of prime note, have rejected Rime both in longer and shorter Works, as have also, long since, our best English Tragedies; as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt Numbers, fit quantity of Syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoided by the learned Ancients both in Poetry and all good Oratory. This neglect then of Rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar Readers, that it rather is to be esteem'd an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to Heroick Poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of Riming."

* From Milton's own edition, 1669.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

This first book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject, man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed. Then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent, who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was by the command of God driven out of heaven with all his crew into the great deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his Angels now fallen into hell, described here, not in the centre, for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed; but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos: here Satan with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded: they rise; their numbers, array of battel, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and a new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in heaven; for that Angels were long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandæmonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal Peers there sit in Council.

Of Man's first disobedience[a], and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook[b] that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues

[a] Milton has proposed the subject of his poem in the first six verses: these lines are perhaps as plain, simple, and unadorned, as any of the whole poem; in which particular the author has conformed himself to the example of Homer, and the precept of Horace. His invocation to a work, which turns in a great measure on the creation of the world, is properly made to the Muse who inspired Moses in those books from whence our author drew his subject; and to the Holy Spirit, who is therein represented as operating after a particular manner in the first production of nature. The whole exordium rises very happily into noble language and sentiment, as I think the transition to the fable is exquisitely beautiful and natural.—Addison.

[b] *And Siloa's brook.*

Siloa was a small brook that flowed near the temple of Jerusalem: it is mentioned, Isaiah viii. 6; so that, in effect, Milton invokes the heavenly Muse that inspired David and the prophets on Mount Sion, and at Jerusalem; as well as Moses on Mount Sinai.—Newton.

Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme [c].
And chiefly thou, O Spirit [d], that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou knowest; thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding [e] on the vast abyss,
And madest it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine [f], what is low raise and support;
That to the highth of this great argument [g]

[c] *Rhyme.*

Rhyme here means *verse.*—T. WARTON.

Blank verse is apt to be loose, thin, and more full of words than thought: the blank verse of Milton is compressed, close-wove, and weighty in matter.

[d] *And chiefly thou, O Spirit.*

Invoking the Muse is commonly a matter of mere form, wherein the poets neither mean, nor desire to be thought to mean, anything seriously: but the Holy Ghost here invoked is too solemn a name to be used insignificantly; and besides, our author, in the beginning of his next work, "Paradise Regained," scruples not to say to the same divine person:—

Inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute.

This address, therefore, is no mere formality: yet some may think that he incurs a worse charge of enthusiasm, or even profaneness, in vouching inspiration for his performance: but the Scriptures represent inspiration as of a much larger extent than is commonly apprehended, teaching, that "every good gift," in naturals as well as in morals, "descendeth from the great Father of Lights." James i. 17. And an extraordinary skill, even in mechanical arts, is there ascribed to the illumination of the Holy Ghost. It is said of Bezaleel, who was to make the furniture of the tabernacle, that "the Lord had filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, and to devise curious works," &c. Exod. xxxv. 31.—HEYLIN.

It may be observed, too, in justification of our author, that other sacred poems are not without the like invocations, and particularly Spenser's hymns of Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty, as well as some modern Latin poems. But I conceive that Milton intended something more; for I have been informed by those who had opportunities of conversing with his widow, that she was wont to say that he did really look upon himself as inspired; and I think his works are not without a spirit of enthusiasm. In the beginning of the second book of the "Reason of Church Government," speaking of his design of writing a poem in the English language, he says, "It was not to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer of that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge; and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." p. 61, edit. 1738.—NEWTON.

[e] *Dove-like sat'st brooding.*

Alluding to Gen: i. 2. "The spirit of God *moved* on the face of the waters;" for the word that we translate *moved*, signifies properly *brooded*, as a bird doth upon her eggs; and Milton says like a *dove*, rather than any other bird, because the descent of the Holy Ghost is compared to a dove, Luke iii. 22. As Milton studied the Scriptures in the original language, his images and expressions are oftener copied from them than from our translations.—NEWTON.

[f] *What in me is dark*
Illumine.

He calls the Holy Ghost the illumining Spirit in his "Prose Works," vol. i. p. 273, edit. 1698. Compare Fairfax's "Tasso," b. viii. st. 76:—

Illumine their dark souls with light divine.—TODD.

[g] *That to the highth of this great argument.*

The *height* of the argument is precisely what distinguishes this poem of Milton from all others. In other works of imagination, the difficulty lies in giving sufficient elevation to the subject: here it lies in raising the imagination up to the grandeur of the

I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men [h].
Say first, for heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of hell [i], say first what cause
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favour'd of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirr'd up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind; what time his pride
Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels; by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers [j],
He trusted to have equal'd the Most High [k]
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim

subject, in adequate conception of its mightiness, and in finding language of such majesty as will not degrade it. A genius less gigantic and less holy than Milton's would have shrunk from the attempt. Milton not only does not lower, but he illumines the bright, and enlarges the great: he expands his wings, and "sails with supreme dominion" up to the heavens, parts the clouds, and communes with angels and unembodied spirits.

[h] *And justify the ways of God to men.*

Pope has thought fit to borrow this verse, with some little variation, "Essay on Man," ep. i. 16:—"but *vindicate* the ways of God to man." It is not easy to conceive any good reason for Pope's preferring *vindicate;* but Milton uses *justify*, as it is the Scripture word, "that thou mightest be *justified* in thy sayings." Rom. iii. 4.—And "the ways of God to men" are *justified* in the many argumentative discourses throughout the poem, particularly in the conferences between God the Father and the Son.—NEWTON.

[i] *Say first, for heaven hides nothing from thy view,*
Nor the deep tract of hell.

The poets attribute a kind of omniscience to the Muse; and very rightly, as it enables them to speak of things which could not otherwise be supposed to come to their knowledge. Thus Homer, Il. ii. 485:—

Ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε, πάρεστέ τε, ἴστε τε πάντα.

And see Virgil, Æn. vii. 645. Milton's Muse being the Holy Spirit, must of course be omniscient: and the mention of heaven and hell is very proper in this place, as the scene of a great part of the poem is laid sometimes in hell and sometimes in heaven.—NEWTON.

[j] *By whose aid aspiring*
To set himself in glory above his peers.

Here Dr. Bentley objects, that Satan's crime was not his aiming "above his peers:" he was in place high above them before, as the Doctor proves from b. v. 812: but though this be true, Milton may be right here; for the force of the words seems not that Satan aspired to set himself above his peers, but that he aspired *to set himself in glory:* that is, in divine glory; in such glory as God and his Son were set in. Here was his crime; and this is what God charges him with in b. v. 725:—

who intends to erect his throne
Equal to ours.

And in b. vi. 88, Milton says that the rebel angels hoped

To win the mount of God, and on his throne
To set the envier of his state, the proud
Aspirer.

See also, to the same purpose, b. vii. 140, &c.—PEARCE.

[k] *He trusted to have equal'd the Most High.*

See Isaiah, ch. xiv. 13.—STILLINGFLEET.

Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in heaven and battel proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men [l], he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquish'd, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded though immortal: but his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay,
Mix'd with obdurate pride and stedfast hate.
At once, as far as angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild:
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace, flamed; yet from those flames
No light [m], but rather darkness visible [n]
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace

[l] *Nine times the space that measures day and night*
To mortal men.

The nine days' astonishment, in which the angels lay entranced after their dreadful overthrow and fall from heaven, before they could recover either the use of thought or speech, is a noble circumstance, and very finely imagined. The division of hell into seas of fire, and into firm ground impregnated with the same furious element, with that particular circumstance of the exclusion of hope from those infernal regions, are instances of the same great and fruitful invention.—ADDISON.

[m] *Yet from those flames*
No light.

So the Wisdom of Solomon, ch. xviii. 5, 6:—"No power of the fire might give them light; only there appeared unto them a fire kindled of itself, very dreadful."—TODD.

[n] *Darkness visible.*

Milton seems to have used these words to signify gloom: absolute darkness is, strictly speaking, invisible; but where there is a gloom only, there is so much light remaining, as serves to show that there are objects, and yet that those objects cannot be distinctly seen.—PEARCE.

Seneca has a like expression, speaking of the grotto of Pausilipo, epist. lvii.:—"Nihil illo carcere longius, nihil illis faucibus obscurius, quæ nobis præstant, non ut *per tenebras* videamus, sed ut *ipsas*." And, as Voltaire observes, Antonio de Solis, in his "History of Mexico," speaking of the place wherein Montezuma consulted his deities, says, "It was a large dark subterranean vault, where some dismal tapers afforded just *light enough to see the obscurity*." So Euripides, "Bacchæ," v. 510:—

Ὡς ἂν σκότιον εἰσορᾷ κνέφας.

There is much the same image in Spenser, but not so bold, "Faer. Qu." I. i. 14:—

A little glooming light, much like a shade.

Or, after all, Milton might take the hint from his own "Il Penseroso:"

Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.—NEWTON.

And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all[o]; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
Such place eternal justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordain'd
In utter darkness; and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of heaven,
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole[p].
O, how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall o'erwhelm'd
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire[q],
He soon discerns; and weltering by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beëlzebub: to whom the arch-enemy[r],

[o] *Hope never comes,*
That comes to all.

See Dante's "Inferno," ch. iii. 9:—Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' intrate.

[p] *As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.*

Thrice as far as it is from the centre of the earth, which is the centre of the world, according to Milton's system, b. ix. 103, and b. x. 671, to the pole of the world; for it is the pole of the universe, far beyond the pole of the earth, which is here called the *utmost pole*. Homer makes the seat of hell as far beneath the deepest pit of earth as the heaven is above the earth, Iliad viii. 16. Virgil makes it twice as far, Æneid, vi. 578; and Milton *thrice* as far; as if these three great poets had stretched their utmost genius, and vied with each other, who should extend his idea of the depth of hell farthest. But Milton's whole description of hell as much exceeds theirs, as in this single circumstance of the depth of it. And how cool and unaffecting is the *Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα*, the *σιδήρειαί τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός*, of Homer,—the "lugentes campi," the "ferrea turris," and "horrisono stridentes cardine portæ," of Virgil, in comparison with this description by Milton, concluding with that artful contrast, "O, how unlike the place from whence they fell."—NEWTON.

[q] *Tempestuous fire.*

Psalm xi. 6:—"Upon the wicked the Lord will rain fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest."—DUNSTER.

[r] *To whom the arch-enemy.*

The thoughts in the first speech and description of Satan, who is one of the principal actors in this poem, are wonderfully proper to give us a full idea of him: his pride, envy, and revenge, obstinacy, despair, and impenitence, are all of them very artfully interwoven. In short, his first speech is a complication of all those passions which discover themselves separately in several other of his speeches in the poem. The whole part of this great enemy of mankind is filled with such incidents as are very apt to raise and terrify the reader's imagination. Of this nature, in the book now before us, is his being the first that awakens out of the general trance, with his posture on the burning lake, his rising from it, and the description of his shield and spear: to which we may add his call to the fallen angels, that lay plunged and stupefied in the sea of fire.

Amidst those impieties which this enraged spirit utters in other places of this poem, the author has taken care to introduce none that is not big with absurdity, and incapable of shocking a religious reader: his words, as the poet himself describes them, bearing only "a semblance of worth, not substance." He is also with great art described as owning his adversary to be Almighty. Whatever perverse interpretation he puts on the justice, mercy, and other attributes of the Supreme Being, he frequently confesses his omnipotence; that being the perfection he was forced to allow him, and the only consideration which could support his pride under the shame of his defeat.—ADDISON.

And thence in heaven call'd Satan [s],—with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence thus began:—
If thou beest he—But O, how fallen! how changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright! If he, whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Join'd with me once, now misery hath join'd
In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest,
From what highth fallen: so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder; and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fix'd mind
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of spirits arm'd,
That durst dislike his reign; and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battel on the plains of heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost [t]; the unconquerable will
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome;
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me: to bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power,
Who from the terrour of this arm so late
Doubted his empire; that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of gods [u]
And this empyreal substance cannot fail;

[s] *And thence in heaven call'd Satan.*

For the word *Satan*, in Hebrew, signifies an *enemy:* he is THE ENEMY by way of eminence, the chief enemy of God and Man.—NEWTON.

[t] *What though the field be lost?*
All is not lost.

This passage is an excellent improvement upon Satan's speech to the infernal spirits in Tasso, c. iv. st. 15; but seems to be expressed from Fairfax's translation, rather than from the original:—

We lost the field, yet lost we not our heart.—NEWTON.

[u] *Since, by fate, the strength of gods.*

For Satan supposes the angels to subsist by fate and necessity; and he represents them of an empyreal, that is, a fiery substance, as the Scripture itself does, Psalm civ. 4:—"He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a *flame of fire.*"—NEWTON.

Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcileable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of heaven.
So spake the apostate angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud [v], but rack'd with deep despair:
And him thus answer'd soon his bold compeer:—
O prince, O chief of many throned powers,
That led the imbattel'd seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endanger'd heaven's perpetual King;
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate:
Too well I see and rue the dire event,
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low;
As far as gods and heavenly essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigour soon returns;
Though all our glory extinct [w], and happy state
Here swallow'd up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conquerour, whom I now
Of force believe Almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpower'd such force as ours—
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains?
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire;
Or do him mightier service, as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be,
Here in the heart of hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy deep:
What can it then avail, though yet we feel
Strength undiminish'd, or eternal being,
To undergo eternal punishment?
Whereto with speedy words the arch-fiend replied:—

[v] *Vaunting aloud.*

This speech is remarkable for brevity and energy of expression, and justness of the thought arising from the nature of the foregoing speech, and Satan's present misery.—CALLANDER.

[w] *Though all our glory extinct.*

As a flame put out and extinguished for ever. This word is very properly applied to their irrecoverable loss of that angelic beauty which accompanied them when in a state of innocence. The Latins have used the word "extinctus" in the same metaphorical sense. Thus Virgil, Æn. iv. 322:—

te propter eundem
Extinctus pudor, et, qua sola sidera adibam,
Fama prior. CALLANDER.

Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering [x]; but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight;
As being the contrary to his high will,
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil:
Which oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recall'd [y]

[x] *To be weak is miserable,*
Doing or suffering.

Satan having in his speech boasted that the "strength of gods could not fail," v. 116, and Beëlzebub having said, v. 146, "If God has left us this our strength entire, to suffer pain strongly, or to do him mightier service as his thralls, what then can our strength avail us?" Satan here replies very properly, whether we are to suffer or to work, yet still it is some comfort to have our strength undiminished: for it is a *miserable* thing, says he, to be *weak* and without strength, whether we are *doing* or *suffering.* This is the sense of the place; and this is farther confirmed by what Belial says, b. ii. 199:—

To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal.

PEARCE.

[y] *But see! the angry Victor hath recall'd.*

Dr. Bentley has really made a very material objection to this and some other passages of the poem, wherein the good angels are represented as pursuing the rebel host with fire and thunderbolts down through Chaos, even to the gates of hell, as being contrary to the accounts which the angel Raphael gives to Adam in the sixth book; and it is certain that there the good angels are ordered to "stand still only and behold," and the Messiah alone expels them out of heaven; and after he has expelled them, and hell has closed upon them, b. vi. 880:—

Sole victor from the expulsion of his foes,
Messiah his triumphal chariot turn'd:
To meet him all his saints, who silent stood
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanced.

These accounts are plainly contrary the one to the other; but the author does not therefore contradict himself, nor is one part of his scheme inconsistent with another: for it should be considered who are the persons that give these different accounts. In book vi. the angel Raphael is the speaker, and therefore his account may be depended upon as the genuine and exact truth of the matter: but in the other passages Satan himself, or some of his angels, are the speakers; and they were too proud and obstinate ever to acknowledge the Messiah for their conqueror: as their rebellion was raised on his account, they would never own his superiority; they would rather ascribe their defeat to the whole host of heaven than to him alone; or, if they did indeed imagine their pursuers to be so many in number, their fears multiplied them, and it serves admirably to express how much they were terrified and confounded. In book vii. 830, the noise of his chariot is compared to "the sound of a numerous host;" and perhaps they might think that a numerous host were really pursuing. In one place, indeed, we have Chaos speaking thus, b. ii. 996:—

and heaven gates
Pour'd out by millions her victorious bands
Pursuing.

But what a condition was Chaos in during the fall of the rebel angels! See b. vi. 871:—

Nine days they fell; confounded Chaos roar'd
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall

His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of heaven: the sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery surge, that from the precipice
Of heaven received us falling; and the thunder,
Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep [z].
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbour there;
And, reassembling our afflicted powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our enemy; our own loss how repair;
How overcome this dire calamity;
What reinforcement we may gain from hope;
If not, what resolution, from despair [a].
  Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood; in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove [b],
Briareos, or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held; or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:
Him, haply, slumbering on the Norway foam,

Through his wild anarchy: so huge a rout
Incumber'd him with ruin.

We must suppose him therefore to speak according to his own fruitful and disturbed imagination; he might conceive that so much

Ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,

could not all be effected by a single hand: and what a sublime idea must it give us of the terrors of the Messiah, that he alone should be as formidable as if the whole host of heaven were pursuing! So that the seeming contradiction, upon examination, proves rather a beauty than any blemish to the poem.—NEWTON.

[z] *To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.*

A truly magnificent line.

[a] *If not, what resolution, from despair.*

The sentiment in this verse may be referred to Seneca's Medea, ver. 163:—

"Qui nihil potest sperare, nihil desperet."—DUNSTER.

[b] *Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove.*

Here Milton commences that train of learned allusions which was among his peculiarities, and which he always makes poetical by some picturesque epithet, or simile.

The pilot of some small night-founder'd skiff[e],
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea[d], and wished morn delays.
So stretch'd out huge in length the arch-fiend lay,
Chain'd on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had risen or heaved his head, but that the will[e]
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs;
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others; and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy shown
On man by him seduced: but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance pour'd.
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
Driven backward[f], slope their pointing spires, and, roll'd

[c] *The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff.*

Some little boat, whose pilot dares not proceed in his course for fear of the dark night: a metaphor taken from a *foundered* horse that can go no farther; or *night-foundered*, in danger of sinking at night, from the term, *foundering at sea.* I prefer the former, as being Milton's aim.—HUME.

Surely Hume is wrong; the whole of his imagery is beautiful.

[d] *Invests the sea.*

A phrase often used by poets, who call darkness the mantle of the night, with which he *invests* the earth. Milton, in another place, has another such beautiful figure, and truly poetical, when speaking of the moon, b. iv. 609:—

And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

And in another place, b. ix. 52:—

Night's hemisphere had *veil'd* the horizon round.

Thus the epithet κυανόπεπλος is given to the night by Musæus. Statius has a similar expression to that of Milton, Theb. v. 15:—

——ingenti tellurem proximus *umbra*
Vestit Athos, &c. CALLANDER.

[e] *But that the will.*

This is a material part of the poem; and the management of it is admirable. The poet has nowhere shown his judgment more, than in the reasons assigned, on account of which we find this rebel released from his adamantine chains, and at liberty to become the great, though bad agent of the poem. We may also notice the finely plain but majestic language in which these reasons are assigned.—DUNSTER.

[f] *On each hand the flames,*
Driven backward, &c.

See the achievement of Britomart in Spenser, Faer. Qu. III. xi. 25. The circumstance of the fire, mixed with a most noisome smoke, which prevents her from entering into the house of Busyrane, is, I think, an obstacle which we meet with in "The Seven Champions of Christendom." And there are many instances in this achievement parallel to those in the adventure of the Black Castle, and the Enchanted Fountain:—

Therewith resolved to prove her utmost might,
Her ample shield she threw before her face,
And her sword's point directing forward right
Assayl'd the flame; the which eftesoones gave place,

In billows, leave in the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air
That felt unusual weight[g], till on dry land
He lights; if it were land, that ever burn'd
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire;
And such appear'd in hue, as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus[h], or the shatter'd side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuel'd entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singed bottom all involved
With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him follow'd his next mate;
Both glorying to have 'scaped the Stygian flood,
As gods, and by their own recover'd strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal Power.
  Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
Said then the lost archangel, this the seat,
That we must change for heaven? this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he,
Who now is Sovran, can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equal'd, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells[i]! Hail, horrours; hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,

And did itselfe divide with equall space,
That through she passed; as a thonder-bolt
Perceth the yielding ayre, &c.

Milton, who tempered and exalted the extravagance of romance with the dignity of Homer, has here given us a noble image, which, like Spenser's, seems to have had its foundation in some description which he had met with in books of chivalry.— T. Warton.

[g] *Incumbent on the dusky air*
That felt unusual weight.

This conceit of the air's feeling unusual weight is borrowed from Spenser's description of the old dragon, Faer. Qu. I. xi. 18:—

Then with his waving wings displayed wyde,
Himselfe up high he lifted from the ground;
And with strong flight did forcibly divyde
The yielding *ayre*, which nigh *too feeble* found
Her flitting parts, and element unsound,
To beare so great a weight. Thyer.

The superiority of Milton in nerve and compression is striking. Spenser breaks his descriptions into too many parts, by which he distracts his pictures; and I must advocate the dignity of blank verse over the diffuseness of Spenser's stanza.

[h] *Torn from Pelorus.*

Here again Milton brings in his learned allusions and illustrations: the picture is highly poetical and sublime.

[i] *Farewell, happy fields,*
Where joy for ever dwells.

The pathos in this passage is exquisite.

Receive thy new possessour; one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place[j], and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be; all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy; will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure; and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell:
Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven[k].
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and copartners of our loss,
Lie thus astonish'd on the oblivious pool;
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion; or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regain'd in heaven, or what more lost in hell?
So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub
Thus answer'd: Leader of those armies bright,
Which but the Omnipotent none could have foil'd,
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battel when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal, they will soon resume
New courage, and revive, though now they lie
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed:
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth.
He scarce had ceased, when the superior fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders, like the moon[l], whose orb

[j] *The mind is its own place, &c.*

Those are some of the extravagances of the Stoics, and could not be better ridiculed than they are here, by being put in the mouth of Satan in his present situation.—THYER.

Shakspeare says in Hamlet,—

There is nothing either good or bad, but
Thinking makes it so. TODD.

[k] *Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.*

Dr. Newton observes that this line is a very fine improvement upon Prometheus's answer to Mercury in Æschylus. Prom. Vinct. 965, 967. Compare also P. Fletcher's "Locusts," 1627, p. 37.

[l] *The broad circumference*
Hung on his shoulders, like the moon.

See the shield of Radegund. Faer. Qu. v. v. 3. Here Milton shines in all his majestic splendour: his mighty imagination almost excels itself. There is indescribable magic in this picture.

Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening, from the top of Fesolé,
Or in Valdarno [m], to descry new lands,
Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe.
His spear, to equal which the tallest pine,
Hewn on Norwegian hills [n] to be the mast
Of some great admiral, were but a wand,
He walk'd with to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle; not like those steps
On heaven's azure: and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamed sea he stood, and call'd
His legions, angel forms, who lay intranced,
Thick as autumnal leaves [o] that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High overarch'd imbower; or scatter'd sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion arm'd [p]
Hath vex'd the Red-sea coast [q], whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris [r] and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred [s] they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore [t] their floating carcases

[m] *At evening, from the top of Fesolé,*
Or in Valdarno.

There is a spell sometimes even in the poet's selection of proper names: their very sound has a charm.

[n] *Norwegian hills.*

The hills of Norway, barren and rocky, but abounding in vast woods, from whence are brought masts of the largest size.—HUME.

The annotators leave unnoticed the marvellous grandeur of this description, while they babble on petty technicalities. The "walking over the burning marle" is astonishing and tremendous.

[o] *Thick as autumnal leaves.*

Here we see the impression of scenery made upon Milton's mind in his youth, when he was at Florence. This is a favourite passage with all readers of descriptive poetry. The account of Vallombrosa may be found in the volumes of numerous travellers.

[p] *With fierce winds Orion arm'd.*

Orion is a constellation represented in the figure of an armed man, and supposed to be attended with stormy weather:—"Assurgens fluctu nimbosus Orion." Virg. Æn. i. 539.—NEWTON.

Here the poet again introduces his learned historical allusions with a magnificent picture.

[q] *Hath vex'd the Red-sea coast.*

The Red-sea abounds so much with sedge, that in the Hebrew Scriptures it is called the "Sedgy Sea." And Milton says "Hath vex'd the Red-sea coast," particularly because the wind usually drives the sedge in great quantities towards the shore.—NEWTON.

[r] *Busiris.*

Pharaoh is called by some writers Busiris.

[s] *Perfidious hatred.*

Because Pharaoh, after leave given to the Israelites to depart, followed after them as fugitives.—HUME.

[t] *From the safe shore.*

Much has been said of the long similitudes of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, wherein they fetch a compass, as it were, to draw in new images, besides those in which the

And broken chariot-wheels: so thick bestrown,
Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He call'd so loud, that all the hollow deep
Of hell resounded[u]: Princes, potentates,
Warriors, the flower of heaven, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal spirits: or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battel to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conquerour? who now beholds
Cherub and seraph rolling in the flood,
With scatter'd arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from heaven gates discern
The advantage, and descending tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf.
Awake, arise; or be for ever fallen!
They heard, and were abash'd, and up they sprung
Upon the wing; as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to their general's voice they soon obey'd,
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
Waved round the coast, up call'd a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like night, and darken'd all the land of Nile[v]:
So numberless were those bad angels seen,
Hovering on wing under the cope of hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires:
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear

direct point of likeness consists. I think they have been sufficiently justified in the general; but in this before us, while the poet is digressing, he raises a new similitude from the floating carcases of the Eyptians.—HEYLIN.

[u] *The hollow deep*
Of hell resounded.

This magnificent call of Satan to his prostrate host could have been written by nobody but Milton.

[v] *Darken'd all the land of Nile.*

The devils, at the command of their infernal monarch, flying abroad over the world to injure the Christian cause, are similarly compared by Tasso to black storms obscuring the face of day (Gier. Lib. iv. 18). And, where they are all driven back by Michael, it is said, ix. 66:—

Liberato di lor quella si *negra*
Faccia depone il *mondo*. DUNSTER.

Of their great sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain.
A multitude, like which the populous north
Pour'd never[w] from her frozen loins, to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons[x]
Came like a deluge on the south, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
Forthwith from every squadron and each band
The heads and leaders thither haste, where stood
Their great commander; godlike shapes and forms
Excelling human, princely dignities,
And powers, that erst in heaven sat on thrones;
Though of their names[y] in heavenly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and razed

[w] *A multitude, like which the populous north*
Pour'd never.

This comparison doth not fall below the rest, as some have imagined. They were thick as the leaves, and numberless as the locusts; but such a multitude the north *never* poured forth. The subject of this comparison rises very much above the others,—the leaves and locusts. The northern parts of the world are observed to be more fruitful of people than the hotter countries: hence "the populous north," which Sir William Temple calls "the northern hive."—NEWTON.

Dr. Newton does not seem to be aware that the three comparisons which he refers to, relate to the three different states in which these fallen angels are represented. When abject they lie supine on the lake, they are in this situation compared, in point of number, to vast heaps of leaves which in autumn the poet himself had observed to bestrew the watercourses and bottoms of Vallambrosa. When roused by their great leader's objurgatory summons, and on wing, they are in this second situation again compared, in point of number, to the locusts which were sent as a divine vengeance or plague on the land of Egypt, when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites depart: these two similes are admirable, and in their place could not, I believe, well be surpassed. That of the locusts, independently of its being taken from Scripture, far surpasses in every respect that of the birds of passage in Virgil and Tasso, which both poets have joined to that of leaves falling, to represent the numerous ghosts crowding on the banks of Styx, and the multitude of devils driven back by Michael to the infernal regions. The object of the third comparison is to illustrate the number of the fallen angels, when alighted on the firm brimstone; and, like soldiers, forming into bands, under their respective leaders. In this situation, I doubt if he could well have found anything so proper to compare them with, as the most numerous of troops which history records ever to have marched out upon any military expedition. But it must be allowed that the comparing one band of troops to another, where, though different in their nature, the description of them when embodied is so nearly similar, is rather an exemplification than a simile. Besides, comparing the numerous infernal legions to a circumstance of real undecorated history, is no very lucid or poetic illustration; and in this respect I much prefer the reference to the legends of romance and the fabulous ages, ver. 576, &c.—DUNSTER.

[x] *When her barbarous sons.*

They were truly *barbarous;* for besides exercising several cruelties, they destroyed all the monuments of learning and politeness wherever they came. They were the Goths, and Huns, and Vandals, who overran all the southern provinces of Europe; and, crossing the Mediterranean beneath Gibraltar, landed in Africa, and spread themselves as far as Libya. *Beneath Gibraltar* means, more southward, the north being uppermost in the globe.—NEWTON.

[y] *Though of their names.*

Psalm ix. 5, 6:—"Thou hast put out their *name* for ever and ever: their *memorial* is perished with them." And Rev. iii. 5:—"I will not blot his *name* out of the book of life."—GILLIES.

By their rebellion from the Book of Life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names; till, wandering o'er the earth,
Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
By falsities and lies[a] the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of him that made them to transform[a],
Oft to the image of a brute, adorn'd
With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities[b]:
Then were they known to men by various names,
And various idols through the heathen world.
 Say, Muse, their names then known[c], who first, who last,
Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch
At their great emperour's call; as next in worth
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand;
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.
The chief were those, who, from the pit of hell
Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix
Their seats long after next the seat of God,
Their altars by his altar, gods adored
Among the nations round; and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
Between the cherubim: yea, often placed
Within his sanctuary itself, their shrines,
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
And with their darkness durst affront his light.
First Moloch[d], horrid king, besmear'd with blood

[a] *By falsities and lies.*

That is, as Mr. Upton observes, by *false idols*, under a corporeal representation *belying* the true God. The poet plainly alludes to Rom. i. 22.—NEWTON.

[a] *And the invisible Glory of him that made them to transform, &c.*

Alluding to Rom. i. 23.—NEWTON.

[b] *And devils to adore for deities.*

Levit. xvii. 7:—"They shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils." And see also Ps. cvi. 37.—TODD.

[c] *Say, Muse, their names then known.*

For the enumeration of the Syrian and Arabian deities it may be observed that Milton has comprised in one hundred and thirty very beautiful lines, the two learned syntagmas, which Selden had composed on that abstruse subject.—Gibbon, Rom. Emp. vol. i. p. 539 note, 4to. edit. The exordium to this enumeration, "who first, who last," is from Homer, Il. v. 703:

Ἔνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ' ὕστατον. TODD.

[d] *First Moloch, horrid king.*

First, after Satan and Beëlzebub. *Moloch* signifies *king*, and he is called "*horrid* king," because of the human sacrifices which were made to him: the expression, "passed through fire," is taken from Leviticus, xviii. 21; or 2 Kings, xxiii. 10. His idol was of brass, sitting on a throne, and wearing a crown; having the head of a calf, and his arms extended to receive the miserable victims which were to be sacrificed;

Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud
Their children's cries unheard, that pass'd through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshipp'd in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob, and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led[e] by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple of God,
On that opprobrious hill; and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom[f], Tophet thence
And black Gehenna call'd, the type of hell.
Next Chemos[g], the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonáim, Seon's realm, beyond

and therefore it is here probably styled "his grim idol." He was the god of the Ammonites, 1 Kings, xi. 7, and was worshipped in Rabba, their capital city, called the "city of waters," 2 Sam. xi. 27; and in the neighbouring countries as far as to the river Arnon, the boundary of their country on the south.—NEWTON.

Dr. Newton also says that Moloch was supposed to be the same as Saturn: but Milton did not suppose it, or at least did not attend to the supposition; as Saturn himself is afterwards mentioned, verse 519. But Moloch has also been supposed to be Mars; with a view to which, Milton seems to have drawn his character in the second book. That the planet Mars was named Moloch by the Egyptians is mentioned by Beyer, in his "Additamenta to Selden's Syntagma de Diis Syr."—DUNSTER.

The part of Moloch is, in all its circumstances, full of that fire and fury which distinguish this spirit from the rest of the fallen angels. He is described in the first book as besmeared with the blood of human sacrifices, and delighted with the tears of parents and the cries of children: in the second book, he is marked out as the fiercest spirit that fought in heaven: and if we consider the figure which he makes in the sixth book, where the battle of the angels is described, we find it every way answerable to the same furious, enraged character.

It may be worth while to observe, that Milton has represented this violent impetuous spirit, who is hurried on by such precipitate passions, as the *first* that rises in that assembly to give his opinion on their present posture of affairs; accordingly, he declares himself abruptly for war; and appears incensed at his companions for losing so much time as even to deliberate upon it. All his sentiments are rash, audacious, and desperate: such is that of arming themselves with their tortures, and turning their punishments upon him who inflicted them. His preferring annihilation to shame or misery is also highly suitable to his character; as the comfort he draws from disturbing the peace of heaven, that, if it be not victory, it is revenge, is a sentiment truly diabolical, and becoming the bitterness of this implacable spirit.—ADDISON.

[e] *The wisest heart*
Of Solomon he led.

Solomon built a temple to Moloch in the Mount of Olives, 1 Kings, xi. 7, which is therefore called "that opprobrious hill."—NEWTON.

[f] *The pleasant valley of Hinnom.*

See Jer. vii. 31. It was called also *Tophet*, from the Hebrew *toph*, a drum; drums and such like noisy instruments being used to drown the cries of the miserable children who were offered to this idol: and Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom, is, in several places of the New Testament, and by our Saviour himself, made the name and type of hell.—NEWTON.

[g] *Next Chemos.*

Moloch and Chemos are joined together, 1 Kings, xi. 7. And it was a natural transition from the god of the Ammonites to the god of their neighbours the Moabites. See a long geographical note by NEWTON.

The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Elealé, to the asphaltic pool:
Peor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
Ev'n to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate[h];
Till good Josiah drove them thence to hell.
With these came they, who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates[i] to the brook that parts
Ægypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of Bäalim and Ashtaroth[j], those male,
These feminine: for spirits, when they please[k],
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure;
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aery purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfil.
For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
Bow'd down in battel, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came Astoreth[l], whom the Phœnicians call'd

[h] *Lust hard by hate.*

What a fine moral sentiment has Milton here introduced and couched in half a verse! He might perhaps have in view Spenser's "Mask of Cupid," where Anger, Strife, &c., are represented as immediately following Cupid in the procession.—THYER.

The poet's moral is exactly verified in the incestuous and cruel conduct of Amnon towards Tamar, 2 Sam. xiii. 15:—"Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred, wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love, wherewith he had loved her." The hemistich is a fine commentary on the passage.—TODD.

[i] *Old Euphrates.*

Gen. ii. 14. It bordered eastward on the Promised Land. See NEWTON.

[j] *Bäalim and Ashtaroth.*

They are frequently named together in Scripture. They were the general names of the gods and goddesses of Syria and Palestine: they are supposed to mean the sun and the host of heaven.—NEWTON.

[k] *For spirits, when they please.*

See Michael Psellus's Dialogue, published in Greek and Latin, at Paris, in 1615, concerning the operations of Demons. See also Wierus, "De Præstigiis Dæmonum," 1582.—NEWTON and TODD.

The passage in the catalogue, explaining the manner how spirits transform themselves by contraction or enlargement of their dimensions, is introduced with great judgment, to make way for several accidents in the sequel of the poem.—ADDISON.

[l] *With these in troop*
Came Astoreth.

The goddess of the Phœnicians, under which name the moon was adored. Solomon built her a temple on the Mount of Olives.—NEWTON.

Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king, whose heart, though large[m],
Beguiled by fair Idolatresses, fell
To idols foul. Thammuz[n] came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties, all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat;
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw[o], when, by the vision led,
His eye survey'd the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopp'd off
In his own temple, on the grunsel edge,
Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers:
Dagon his name[p]; sea monster, upward man
And downward fish: yet had his temple high
Rear'd in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him follow'd Rimmon[q]; whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost, and gain'd a king;
Ahaz his sottish conquerour, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage[r], and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquish'd. After these appear'd

[m] *Whose heart, though large.*

1 Kings, iv. 29:—"And God gave Solomon *largeness of heart.*"—TODD.

[n] *Thammuz.*

He was the god of the Syrians, the same with Adonis.—NEWTON.

[o] *Ezekiel saw.*

See Ezekiel, viii. 12.—TODD.

[p] *Dagon his name.*

See 1 Sam. v. 4.—NEWTON.

[q] *Rimmon.*

Rimmon was a god of the Syrians.—NEWTON.

[r] *God's altar to disparage.*

See 2 Kings, xvi. 10; and 2 Chron. xxviii. 23.—NEWTON.

A crew, who under names of old renown,
Osiris, Isis, Orus [s], and their train,
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Ægypt and her priests, to seek
Their wandering gods disguisèd in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
The infection [t], when their borrow'd gold composed
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazed ox;
Jehovah, who in one night, when he passed [u]
From Ægypt marching, equal'd with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
Belial came last [v], than whom a spirit more lewd
Fell not from heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself: to him no temple stood
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who fill'd
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise

[s] *Orus, &c.*

Orus was the son of Osiris and Isis.—NEWTON.

[t] *Nor did Israel 'scape*
The infection.

The Israelites, by dwelling so long in Egypt, were infected with the superstitions of the Egyptians.—NEWTON.

[u] *Who in one night, when he pass'd.*

See Exod. xii. 12, and Numb. xxxiii. 3, 4. See also Virg. Æn. viii. 698:—

Omnigenûmque Deûm monstra, et *latrator* Anubis. NEWTON.

[v] *Belial came last.*

Belial is described in the first book as the idol of the lewd and the luxurious: he is in the second book, pursuant to that description, characterised as timorous and slothful; and, if we look into the sixth book, we find him celebrated in the battle of angels for nothing but that scoffing speech which he makes to Satan, on their supposed advantage over the enemy. As his appearance is uniform, and of a piece, in these three several views, we find his sentiments in the infernal assembly every way conformable to his character. Such are his apprehensions of a second battle, his horrors of annihilation, his preferring to be miserable rather than *not to be*. I need not observe, that the contrast of thought in this speech, and that which precedes it, gives an agreeable variety to the debate.

Mammon's character is so fully drawn in the first book, that the poet adds nothing to it in the second. We were told that he was the first who taught mankind to ransack the earth for gold and silver, and that he was the architect of Pandæmonium, or the infernal palace, where the evil spirits were to meet to counsel. His speech in the second book is every way suitable to so depraved a character. How proper is that reflection, of their being unable to taste the happiness of heaven, were they actually there, in the mouth of one, who, while he was in heaven, is said to have had his mind dazzled with the outward pomps and glories of the place, and to have been more intent on the riches of the pavement, than on the beatific vision! I shall also leave the reader to judge how agreeable the sentiments are to the same character, b. ii. 262, &c.

Beëlzebub, who is reckoned the second in dignity that fell, and is, in the first book, the second that awakens out of the trance, and confers with Satan on the situation of their affairs, maintains his rank in the second book.—ADDISON.

Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury, and outrage: and when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron to avoid worse rape.
These were the prime [w] in order and in might;
The rest were long to tell, though far renown'd,
The Ionian gods [x], of Javan's issue, held
Gods, yet confess'd later [y] than heaven and earth,
Their boasted parents. Titan, heaven's first born,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger Saturn: he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So Jove usurping reign'd: these first in Crete
And Ida known; thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff [z],
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Doric land [a]; or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,
And o'er the Celtic roam'd the utmost isles [b].
All these and more came flocking, but with looks
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appear'd
Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue: but he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance [c], gently raised
Their fainted courage, and dispell'd their fears:
Then straight commands, that at the warlike sound

[w] *These were the prime.*

Because these are the idols who are mentioned in the most ancient records, viz., by the sacred text.—CALLANDER.

[x] *The Ionian gods.*

Javan, the fourth son of Japhet, is supposed to have settled in the south-west part of Asia Minor, about *Ionia*.—NEWTON.

[y] *Yet confess'd later.*

See Deut. xxxii. 17.—TODD.

[z] *The Delphian cliff.*

The famous oracle of Apollo at Delphos; and Dodona, the oracle of Jupiter.—CALLANDER.

[a] *Doric land.*

Greece; *the Hesperian fields*, Italy; and *o'er the Celtic*, France and the other countries overrun by the Celtes.—NEWTON.

[b] *Utmost Isles.*

Britain, Ireland, and the adjacent islands.—CALLANDER.

[c] *Semblance of worth, not substance.*

Spenser, Faer. Qu. II. ix. 2:—

Full lively is the *semblaunt*, though the *substance* dead. THYER.

Of trumpets loud and clarions, be uprear'd
His mighty standard: that proud honour claim'd
Azazel[d] as his right, a cherub tall;
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurl'd
The imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor[e] streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich imblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
At which the universal host[f] up sent
A shout that tore hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air
With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appear'd, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable: anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood[g]
Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
To highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battel; and, instead of rage,
Deliberate valor breathed, firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and 'suage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain,
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force, with fixed thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes, that charm'd
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil: and now
Advanced in view they stand, a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriours old with order'd spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty chief
Had to impose: he through the armed files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views; their order due,
Their visages and stature as of gods;
Their number last he sums. And now his heart

[d] *Azazel.*

This name is used for some demon or devil by several ancient authors, Jewish and Christian.—NEWTON.

[e] *Shone like a meteor.*

This line has been borrowed by Gray, and applied to the description of his Bard, but with less grandeur and propriety.

[f] *At which the universal host.*

A most magnificent and inimitable passage.

[g] *Dorian mood.*

Exciting to cool and deliberate courage.—NEWTON.

Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength[h],
Glories; for never, since created man,
Met such imbodied force, as named with these
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warr'd on by cranes; though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were join'd
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mix'd with auxiliar gods[i]; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son[j],
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabia[k]. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread commander: he, above the rest[l]
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower: his form had yet not lost

[h] *Hardening in his strength.*

See Dan. v. 20:—"His *heart* was lifted up, and his mind *hardened in pride.*"—Gillies.

[i] *Mix'd with auxiliar gods.*

In the war between the sons of Œdipus at Thebes, and between the Greeks and Trojans at Ilium, the heroes were assisted by the gods, who are therefore called *auxiliar gods.*—Newton.

[j] *Uther's son.*

King Arthur, whose exploits Milton once intended to celebrate in an epic poem.—Todd.

[k] *By Fontarabia.*

Borrowed from Dante. See Cary's Dante.

[l] *He, above the rest.*

The greatest masters in painting had not such sublime ideas as Milton; and, among all their devils, have drawn no portrait comparable to this; as everybody must allow who has seen the pictures or the prints of "Michael and the Devil," by Raphael; or of the same by Guido; and of the "Last Judgment," by Michael Angelo.—Newton.

And in what does this poetical picture consist? In images of a tower; an archangel; the sun rising through mists, or in an eclipse; the ruin of Monarchs; and the revolutions of kingdoms. The mind is hurried out of itself, by a crowd of great and confused images, which affect because they are crowded and confused; for, separate them, and you lose much of the greatness; and join them, and you infallibly lose the clearness.—Burke.

I can find neither confusion nor obscurity in this passage. The firmness of the devil's station or posture is here compared to that of a tower, and his faded or diminished splendour to that of the sun seen through a morning haze, or from behind the moon during an eclipse; all which is perfectly clear; the objects of comparison being at once grand and illustrative; and the description of them, as far as they are described, distinct, correct, and circumstantial. The properties of solidity and firmness only, in the tower, being the objects of comparison, to have described its form or magnitude would have been silly and impertinent; but the diminution of brightness is an occasional effect; and when an occasional effect is made the object of poetical comparison or description, it is always necessary to state its causes and circumstances,—which the poet has here done with equal conciseness, precision, perspicuity, and energy; and it is to this that its sublimity is, in a great degree, owing.—R. P. Knight.

All her original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than archangel ruin'd, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen[m]
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs: darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek; but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather,
(Far other once beheld in bliss) condemn'd
For ever now to have their lot in pain;
Millions of spirits for his fault amerced[n]
Of heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt; yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory wither'd. As when heaven's fire
Hath scathed[o] the forest oaks or mountain pines,

[m] *As when the sun new-risen.*

Few poetical images can be finer than this, or more beautifully expressed. The precision with which the image is delineated is incomparable.

[n] *Millions of spirits for his fault amerced.*

I must not here omit that beautiful circumstance of Satan's bursting into tears upon his survey of those innumerable spirits whom he had involved in the same guilt and ruin with himself.

There is no single passage in the whole poem worked up to a greater sublimity than that wherein his person is described, ver. 589, &c. His sentiments are every way answerable to his character, and suitable to a created being of the most exalted and most depraved nature. Such is that in which he takes possession of the place of torments, ver. 250, &c., and afterwards, ver. 258, &c.

The catalogue of evil spirits has abundance of learning in it, and a very agreeable turn of poetry; which rises in a great measure from its describing the places where they were worshipped, by those beautiful marks of rivers so frequent among the ancient poets. The author had doubtless in this place Homer's catalogue of ships, and Virgil's list of warriors, in his view. The characters of Moloch and Belial prepare the reader's mind for their respective speeches and behaviour in the second and sixth books. The account of Thammuz is finely romantic, and suitable to what we read among the ancients of the worship which was paid to that idol.

The description of Azazel's stature, and the infernal standard which he unfurls, as also of that ghastly light by which the fiends appear to one another in their places of torments, are wonderfully poetical. Such are the shout of the whole host of fallen angels when drawn up in battle array; the review which the leader makes of his infernal army; the flash of light which appeared upon the drawing of their swords; the sudden production of the Pandæmonium; the artificial illumination made in it.—ADDISON.

[o] *As when heaven's fire
Hath scathed.*

This is a very beautiful and close simile: it represents the majestic stature and withered glory of the angels; and the last with great propriety, since their lustre was impaired by thunder, as well as that of the trees in the simile: and besides, the blasted heath gives us some idea of that singed, burning soil on which the angels were

With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half inclose him round
With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he assay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth[p]; at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way.
O myriads of immortal spirits! O powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty; and that strife
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change
Hateful to utter: but what power of mind,
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have fear'd,
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied heaven[q], shall fail to reascend
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of heaven,
If counsels different or dangers shunn'd
By me have lost our hopes: but he, who reigns
Monarch in heaven, till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent, or custom; and his regal state
Put forth at full; but still his strength conceal'd,
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own;
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war, provoked: our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less

standing. Homer and Virgil frequently use comparisons from trees, to express the stature or falling of a hero; but none of them are applied with such variety and propriety of circumstances as this of Milton. See "An Essay upon Milton's Imitation of the Ancients," p. 24.—NEWTON.

[p] *Thrice he assay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,*
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth.

He had Ovid in his thought, Met. xi. 419:—

Ter conata loqui, ter fletibus ora rigavit. BENTLEY.

The turn of the words bears a near resemblance to Spenser, Faer. Qu. I. xi. 41:—

Thrice he assaid it from his foote to draw,
And thrice in vain to draw it did assay.

As also to Sackville, "Induction, Mirror for Magistrates," st. last:—

Thryse he began to tell his doleful tale,
And thryse the sighs did swallow up his voyce. BOWLE.

[q] *Hath emptied heaven.*

It is conceived that a third part of the angels fell with Satan, according to Rev. xii. 4.—NEWTON.

At length from us may find, Who overcomes
By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new worlds, whereof so rife
There went a fame in heaven[r], that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the sons of heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption; thither or elsewhere:
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial spirits in bondage, nor the abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature: peace is despair'd;
For who can think submission? war then, war,
Open or understood, must be resolved.
He spake; and, to confirm his words, outflew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined hell[s]: highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of heaven.
There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belch'd fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf; undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, wing'd with speed,
A numerous brigad hasten'd; as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe arm'd,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on[t];
Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
From heaven; for ev'n in heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent: admiring more
The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,

[r] *There went a fame in heaven.*

There is something wonderfully beautiful, and very apt to affect the reader's imagination, in this ancient prophecy or report in heaven concerning the creation of man. Nothing could show more the dignity of the species than this tradition, which ran of them before their existence: they are represented to have been the talk of heaven before they were created. Virgil, in compliment to the Roman commonwealth, makes the heroes of it appear in their state of pre-existence; but Milton does a far greater honour to mankind in general, as he gives us a glimpse of them even before they are in being.—ADDISON.

[s] *The sudden blaze*
Far round illumined hell.

Another true Miltonic picture.

[t] *Mammon led them on.*

This name is Syriac, and signifies riches. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," Matth. vi. 24. Mammon is by some supposed to be the God of riches, and is accordingly personified by Milton, and had been before by Spenser; whose description of Mammon and his cave, Milton seems to have had his eye upon in several places.—NEWTON.

Than aught divine or holy else enjoy'd
In vision beatific: by him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransack'd the centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Open'd into the hill a spacious wound,
And digg'd out ribs of gold. Let none admire
That riches grow in hell; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By spirits reprobate; and in an hour
What in an age they with incessant toil
And hands innumerable scarce perform[u].
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scumm'd the bullion dross:
A third as soon had form'd within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance fill'd each hollow nook:
As in an organ[v], from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose, like an exhalation[w], with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet;
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With golden architrave: nor did there want
Cornice or frieze with bossy sculptures graven;
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon,
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
Equal'd in all their glories, to inshrine
Belus or Serapis, their gods; or seat
Their kings, when Ægypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile

[u] *And hands innumerable scarce perform.*

There were 360,000 men employed for near twenty years upon one of the Pyramids, according to Diodorus Siculus, lib. i., and Pliny, lib. xxxvi. 12.—NEWTON.

[v] *As in an organ.*

This simile is as exact as it is new: and we may observe, that Milton frequently fetches his images from music, more than any other English poet; as he was very fond of it, and was himself a performer upon the organ and other instruments.—NEWTON.

[w] *Rose, like an exhalation.*

Peck supposes that this hint is taken from some of the moving scenes and machines invented by Inigo Jones, for Charles the First's masques.

Stood fix'd her stately highth: and straight the doors,
Opening their brazen folds, discover wide
Within her ample spaces o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the arched roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring enter'd, and the work some praise,
And some the architect: his hand was known
In heaven by many a tower'd structure high,
Where sceptred angels held their residence,
And sat as princes; whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unadored
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
From heaven[x] they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropp'd from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle; thus they relate,
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught avail'd him now
To have built in heaven high towers; nor did he 'scape
By all his engines; but was headlong sent
With his industrious crew to build in hell.
  Meanwhile the winged heralds, by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandæmonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers: their summons call'd
From every band and squared regiment
By place or choice the worthiest; they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended: all access was throng'd; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall,
(Though like a cover'd field, where champions bold
Wont ride in arm'd, and at the soldan's chair
Defied the best of Panim chivalry

[x] *And how he fell*
From heaven, &c.

Alluding to Homer, Il. i. 590, &c. It is worth observing how Milton lengthens out the time of Vulcan's fall. He not only says with Homer, that it was all day long; but we are led through the parts of the day, from morn to noon, from noon to evening, and this a summer's day. See also Odyss. vii. 288.—NEWTON.

To mortal combat, or career with lance[y])
Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air,
Brush'd with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees[z]
In spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters: they among fresh dews and flowers[a]
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New-rubb'd with balm, expatiate and confer
Their state affairs: so thick the aery crowd
Swarm'd and were straiten'd; till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder! they, but now who seem'd
In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs[b], in narrow room
Throng numberless, like that Pygmëan race
Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,
Whose midnight revels[c], by a forest side,
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees[d], while over-head the moon

[y] *To mortal combat, or career with lance.*

Milton has carefully distinguished the two different methods of combat in the *champ clos.*—CALLANDER.

[z] *As bees.*

An imitation of Homer, who compares the Grecians crowding to a *swarm of bees*, Il. ii. 87. There are such similes also in Virg. Æn. i. 430, vi. 707. But Milton carries the similitude farther than either of his great masters; and mentions the bees "conferring their state affairs," as he is going to give an account of the consultations of the devils.—NEWTON.

If we look into the conduct of Homer, Virgil, and Milton; as the great fable is the soul of each poem, so, to give their works an agreeable variety, their episodes are as so many short fables, and their similes so many short episodes; to which you may add, if you please, that their metaphors are so many short similes. If the reader considers the comparisons in the first book of Milton,—of the sun in an eclipse,—of the sleeping leviathan,—of the bees swarming about their hive,—of the fairy dance,—in the view wherein I have here placed them, he will easily discover the great beauties that are in each of those passages.—ADDISON.

[a] *They among fresh dews and flowers.*

It is not necessary to enlarge upon the poetry of this beautiful passage.

[b] *Now less than smallest dwarfs.*

As soon as the infernal palace is finished, we are told, the multitude and rabble of spirits immediately shrunk themselves into a small compass, that there might be room for such a numberless assembly in this capacious hall: but it is the poet's refinement upon this thought which I most admire, and which is indeed very noble in itself; for he tells us, that notwithstanding the vulgar, among the fallen spirits, contracted their forms, those of the first rank and dignity still preserved their natural dimensions.—ADDISON.

[c] *Whose midnight revels.*

Olaus Magnus, treating of the *night-dances* of the fairies and ghosts, relates that *travellers in the night*, and such as watch the flocks and herds, are wont to be compassed about with many strange apparitions of this kind. See b. III. ch. x. Engl. ed. fol. 1658.—TODD.

[d] *Sees,*
Or dreams he sees.

From Apollonius Rhodius, one of his favourite authors, Argonaut. iv. 1479.—TODD.

Sits arbitress[e], and nearer to the earth[f]
Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance
Intent[g], with jocund music charm his ear:
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
Thus incorporeal spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions, like themselves,
The great seraphic lords and cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat[h];
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

[e] *Sits arbitress.*

Witness, spectatress. So Horace, Epod. v. 49:—

O, rebus meis
Non infideles *arbitræ*
Nox et Diana.—HEYLIN.

[f] *Nearer to the earth.*

This is said in allusion to the superstitious notion of witches and faeries having great power over the moon. Virg. Eclog. viii. 69.:—

Carmina vel cœlo possunt deducere lunam.—NEWTON.

[g] *They, on their mirth and dance Intent.*

One of those picturesque pastoral passages with which Milton's early poetry so abounds.

[h] *Secret conclave sat.*

An evident allusion to the *conclaves* of the cardinals on the death of a pope.

BOOK II.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In tracing the progress of this poem by deliberate and minute steps, our wonder and admiration increase. The inexhaustible invention continues to grow upon us; each page, each line, is pregnant with something new, picturesque, and great: the condensity of the matter is without any parallel: the imagination often contained in a single passage is more than equal to all that secondary poets have produced: the fable of the voyage through Chaos is alone a sublime poem. Milton's descriptions of materiality have always touches of the spiritual, the lofty, and the empyreal.

Milton has too much condensation to be fluent: a line or two often conveys a world of images and ideas: he expatiates over all time, all space, all possibilities: he unites earth with heaven, with hell, with all intermediate existences, animate and inanimate; and his illustrations are drawn from all learning, historical, natural, and speculative. In him, almost always, "more is meant than meets the ear." An image, an epithet, conveys a rich picture.

What is the subject of observation may be told without genius; but the wonder and the greatness lie in invention, if the invention be noble, and according to the principles of possibility.

Who could have conceived,—or, if conceived, who could have expressed,—the voyage of Satan through Chaos, but Milton? Who could have invented so many distinct and grand obstacles in his way? and all picturesque, all poetical, and all the topics of intellectual meditation and reflection, or of spiritual sentiment?

All the faculties of the mind are exercised, stretched, and elevated at once by every page of "Paradise Lost."

Invention is the first and most indispensable essential of true poetry; but not the only one: the invention must have certain high, moral, sound, wise qualities; and, in addition to these, such as are picturesque or spiritual. It is easy to invent what is improbable or unnatural. Nothing will do which cannot command our belief.

Inventions either of character, imagery, or sentiment, taken separately in small fragments, may still have force and merit: but when they form an integral and appropriate part of a long whole, how infinitely their power, depth, and bearings are increased!

In poetry, we must consider both the original conceptions and the illustrations: each derives interest and strength from the other: a mere copy of an image drawn from nature may have some beauty; but the invention and the essential poetry lie in their complex use, when applied as an embodiment to something intellectual. Imagery is almost always so used by Milton; and so it was used by Homer and Virgil. This gives a new light to the mind of the reader, and creates combinations which perhaps did not before exist: the poet thus spiritualises matter, and materialises spirit. When what is presented is merely such scenery of nature as the painter can give by lines and colours, it falls far short of the poet's power and charm. Poetry, purely descriptive, is not of the first order.

There are lines in the "Paradise Lost," which would seem to be mere abstract opinions; but they are not so; inset as they are into the course of a sublime, densewove narrative, they derive colour and character from the position which they occupy. So placed, their plainness is their strength and their spell: ornamented language would have weakened them. Of all styles, the uniformly florid is the most fatiguing.

That Milton could bring so much learning, as well as so much imaginative invention, to bear on every part of his infinitely-extended, yet, thick-compacted fable, is truly miraculous. Were the learning superficial and loosely applied, the

wonder would not be great, or not nearly so great; but it is always profound, solid, conscientious; and in its combinations original.

Bishop Atterbury has said, in opposition to the general opinion, that the allegory of Sin and Death is one of the finest inventions of the poem. I agree with him most sincerely. The portress of the gates of hell sits there in a character, and with a tremendous figure and attributes, which no imagination less gigantic than Milton's could have drawn. Is it to be objected that Sin and Death are imaginary persons, when all the persons of the poem, except Adam and Eve, are imaginary? Realities, in the strict sense, do not make the most essential parts of poetry.

ARGUMENT.

THE consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battel be to be hazarded for the recovery of heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferiour, to themselves, about this time to be created: their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan their chief undertakes alone the voyage, is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways, and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to hell gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between hell and heaven; with what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought.

HIGH on a throne[a] of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous east[b] with richest hand
Showers on her kings Barbaric pearl and gold[c],
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence: and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high; insatiate to pursue
Vain war with heaven, and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus display'd:—
Powers and Dominions, Deities of heaven,
For since no deep within her gulf can hold

[a] *High on a throne.*

See Spenser, Faery Queen, I. iv. 8:—

High above all a cloth of state was spred,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day,
On which there sate, &c. STILLINGFLEET.

[b] *Or where the gorgeous east.*

See Spenser, Faery Queen, III. iv. 23:—

It did passe
The wealth of the East, and pomp of Persian kings.—NEWTON.

[c] *Showers on her kings Barbaric pearl and gold.*

It was the eastern ceremony, at the coronation of their kings, to powder them with *gold-dust* and *seed-pearl*. In the "Life of Timur-bec, or Tamerlane," written by a Persian contemporary author, are the following words, as translated by Mons. Petit de la Croix, in the account there given of his coronation, b. II. c. i.:—"Les princes du sang royal et les émïrs répandirent à pleines mains," with liberal hand, "sur sa tête quantité d'or et de pierreries selon la coutume."—WARBURTON.

See Virgil, Æn. ii. 504:—

Barbarico postes *auro* spoliisque superbi.

Immortal vigor, though oppress'd and fallen,
I give not heaven for lost; from this descent
Celestial virtues rising, will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate.
Me though just right and the fix'd laws of heaven
Did first create your leader; next free choice,
With what besides, in council or in fight,
Hath been achieved of merit; yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Establish'd in a safe unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferiour; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction; for none sure will claim in hell
Precedence; none, whose portion[d] is so small
Of present pain, that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old;
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us: and by what best way[e],
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate. Who can advise, may speak.
He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,
Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest spirit
That fought in heaven, now fiercer by despair:
His trust was with the Eternal to be deem'd
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all: with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or hell, or worse,
He reck'd not; and these words thereafter spake:—
My sentence is for open war: of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need, not now.
For while they sit contriving, shall the rest,
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend, sit lingering here

[d] *None, whose portion.*

The sense and syntax are plain enough. There is no one, whose portion of present pain is so small, that he will be ambitious to covet more.

[e] *By what best way.*

See Spenser, F. Q. VII. vi. 21.—TODD.

Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of his tyranny who reigns
By our delay? no; let us rather choose,
Arm'd with hell flames and fury, all at once
O'er heaven's high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine he shall hear
Infernal thunder; and for lightning see
Black fire and horrour shot with equal rage
Among his angels; and his throne itself
Mix'd with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult and steep, to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe.
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumm not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat: descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce Foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? the ascent is easy then:—
The event is fear'd; should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
To our destruction; if there be in hell
Fear to be worse destroy'd; what can be worse
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemn'd
In this abhorred deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end,
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour [f]
Calls us to penance? more destroy'd than thus,
We should be quite abolish'd, and expire.
What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the highth enraged,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential; happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being;—
Or if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing: and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,

[f] *The torturing hour.*
Gray has borrowed these words at the opening of his "Hymn to Adversity."

Though inaccessible, his fatal throne[g]:
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.
He ended frowning[h], and his look denounced
Desperate revenge and battel dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane:
A fairer person lost not heaven; he seem'd
For dignity composed and high exploit:
But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropp'd manna, and could make the worse appear[i]
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels; for his thoughts were low;
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful: yet he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began:—
I should be much for open war, O Peers,
As not behind in hate, if what was urged,
Main reason to persuade immediate war,
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success:
When he, who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? the towers of heaven are fill'd
With armed watch, that render all access
Impregnable; oft on the bordering deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of night,
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all hell should rise
With blackest insurrection, to confound
Heaven's purest light; yet our great Enemy
All incorruptible would on his throne
Sit unpolluted[j], and the ethereal mould
Incapable of stain would soon expel

[g] *Fatal throne.*

That is, *upheld by fate*, as he expresses it, b. i. 133.—NEWTON.

[h] *He ended frowning.*

Nobody of any taste or understanding will deny the beauty of the following paragraph; in the whole of which there is not one metaphorical or figurative word. In what then does the beauty of it consist? In the justness of the thought, in the propriety of the expression, in the art of the composition, and in the variety of the versification.—MONBODDO.

[i] *And could make the worse appear.*

Word for word from the known profession of the ancient sophists, Τὸν λόγον τὸν ἥττω κρείττω ποιεῖν.—BENTLEY.

[j] *Would on his throne Sit unpolluted.*

This is a reply to that part of Moloch's speech where he had threatened to mix the throne itself of God with infernal sulphur and strange fire.—NEWTON.

Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage,
And that must end us: that must be our cure,
To be no more: sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being[k],
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallow'd up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion? and who knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever? how he can,
Is doubtful! that he never will, is sure.
Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire
Belike through impotence[l], or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger, whom his anger saves
To punish endless? Wherefore cease we then?
Say they who counsel war;—we are decreed,
Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse?—Is this then worst,
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What! when we fled amain, pursued and struck
With heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The deep to shelter us? this hell then seem'd
A refuge from those wounds: or when we lay
Chain'd on the burning lake? that sure was worse.
What, if the breath, that kindled[m] those grim fires,
Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
And plunge us in the flames? or from above
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? what, if all
Her stores were open'd, and this firmament
Of hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent horrours, threatening hideous fall
One day upon our heads? while we, perhaps
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurl'd,
Each on his rock transfix'd, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds; or for ever sunk

[k] *For who would lose,*
Though full of pain, this intellectual being.
See Gray's celebrated stanza in his Elegy,
For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey, &c.

[l] *Through impotence.*
Weakness of mind.—PEARCE.

[m] *Breath, that kindled.*
See Isaiah, xxx. 33.—NEWTON.

Under yon boiling ocean, wrapp'd in chains:
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
Ages of hopeless end? this would be worse.
War therefore, open or concealed, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from heaven's highth
All these our motions vain sees and derides;
Not more almighty to resist our might,
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we then live thus vile, the race of heaven,
Thus trampled, thus expell'd, to suffer here
Chains and these torments? better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust
That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
If we were wise, against so great a Foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh, when those, who at the spear are bold
And venturous, if that fail them, shrink and fear
What yet they know must follow, to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their Conquerour. This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our Supreme Foe may in time much remit
His anger; and perhaps thus far removed
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punished: whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel;
Or changed at length, and to the place conform'd
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain;
This horrour will grow mild, this darkness light:
Besides what hopes the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting: since our present lot appears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe.
  Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb
Counsell'd ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace: and after him thus Mammon spake:—
  Either to disenthrone the King of heaven
We war, if war be best; or to regain
Our own right lost. Him to unthrone we then

May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle chance, and Chaos judge the strife:
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter: for what place can be for us
Within heaven's bound, unless heaven's Lord supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced halleluiahs; while he lordly sits
Our envied Sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odours, and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In heaven, this our delight: how wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtain'd
Unacceptable, though in heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage: but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves; and from our own
Live to ourselves [n]; though in this vast recess,
Free, and to none accountable; preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create; and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labour and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? how oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark [o] doth heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne: from whence deep thunders roar
Mustering their rage, and heaven resembles hell!
As he our darkness, cannot we his light
Imitate when we please? this desert soil
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can heaven show more?

[n] *Live to ourselves.*

Horace, Epist. I. xviii. 107:—

Ut mihi vivam,
Quod superest ævi.—NEWTON.

[o] *How oft amidst*
Thick clouds and dark.

Imitated from Psalm xviii. 11, 13; and xcvii. 2.—NEWTON: and from 1 Kings, viii. 12.—TODD.

Our torments also may in length of time
Become our elements; these piercing fires
As soft as now severe; our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels [p], and the settled state
Of order; how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are, and where; dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise.
He scarce had finish'd, when such murmur fill'd
The assembly as when hollow rocks retain [q]
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Sea-faring men o'er-watch'd [r], whose bark by chance,
Or pinnace anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest: such applause was heard
As Mammon ended; and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace: for such another field
They dreaded worse than hell: so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
Wrought still within them: and no less desire
To found this nether empire; which might rise,
By policy and long process of time,
In emulation opposite to heaven.
Which when Beëlzebub [s] perceived, than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd
A pillar of state: deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic though in ruin: sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear

[p] *To peaceful counsels.*

These speeches are wonderfully fine; but the question is changed in the course of the debate.—NEWTON.

[q] *As when hollow rocks retain.*

Virgil compares the assent given by the assembly of the gods to Juno's speech, Æn. x. 96, to the rising wind, which our author assimilates to its decreasing murmurs.—HUME.

Newton observes that this was equally proper; as Juno's speech was to rouse: Mammon's, to quiet.

[r] *Now with hoarse cadence lull*
Sea-faring men o'erwatched.

A noble poetical picture.

[s] *Which when Beëlzebub.*

Beëlzebub maintains his rank in the book now before us. There is a wonderful majesty described in his rising up to speak. He acts as a kind of moderator between the two opposite parties, and proposes a third undertaking, which the whole assembly gives in to. The motion he makes of detaching one of their body in search of a new world, is grounded upon a project devised by Satan, and cursorily proposed by him in the first book, ver. 650 et seq., upon which project Beëlzebub grounds his proposal in the present book, ver. 344, &c.—ADDISON.

The weight of mightiest monarchies: his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:—
  Thrones and imperial Powers, offspring of heaven,
Ethereal Virtues; or these titles now
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be call'd
Princes of hell? for so the popular vote
Inclines, here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire. Doubtless; while we dream,
And know not that the King of Heaven hath doom'd
This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne; but to remain
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
Under the inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude: for he, be sure,
In highth or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt; but over hell extend
His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
Us here, as with his golden those in heaven.
What sit we then projecting peace and war?
War hath determined us, and foil'd with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsafed or sought: for what peace will be given
To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But to our power hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the Conquerour least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault, or siege,
Or ambush from the deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place,
(If ancient and prophetic fame in heaven
Err not) another world, the happy seat
Of some new race call'd Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence; but favour'd more
Of Him who rules above: so was his will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath,
That shook heaven's whole circumference, confirm'd.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts to learn
What creatures there inhabit; of what mould,

Or substance: how endued, and what their power,
And where their weakness; how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though heaven be shut,
And heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it: here perhaps
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset; either with hell fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
The puny habitants; or if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
In our confusion; and our joy upraise
In his disturbance: when his darling sons,
Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original and faded bliss,
Faded so soon. Advise, if this be worth
Attempting; or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires.—Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed. For whence,
But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and earth with hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those infernal States, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes; with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:—
  Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,
Synod of gods! and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolved; which from the lowest deep
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient seat; perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms
And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter heaven; or else in some mild zone
Dwell, not unvisited of heaven's fair light,
Secure; and at the brightening orient beam
Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send
In search of this new world? whom shall we find
Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet

The dark unbottom'd infinite abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way? or spread his aery flight,
Upborne with undefatigable wings,
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy isle [t]; what strength, what art can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries and stations thick
Of angels watching round? here he had need
All circumspection; and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage: for on whom we send,
The weight of all, and our last hope, relies.
This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appear'd
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt: but all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
In other's countenance read his own dismay,
Astonish'd: none among the choice and prime
Of those heaven-warring champions could be found,
So hardy, as to proffer or accept
Alone the dreadful voyage: till at last,
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride,
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:—
O progeny of heaven, empyreal thrones,
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seized us, though undismay'd. Long is the way
And hard, that out of hell leads up to light:
Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant
Barr'd over us prohibit all egress.
These pass'd, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night [u] receives him next,
Wide gaping; and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he 'scape into whatever world,
Or unknown region; what remains him less
Than unknown dangers and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne [v], O Peers,

[t] *The happy isle.*

The earth hanging in the sea of air. So Cicero calls the earth, De Nat. Deor. ii. 66: —"Quasi magnam quandam *insulam*, quam nos orbem terræ vocamus."—NEWTON.

[u] *Of unessential Night.*

Unessential, void of being; darkness approaching nearest to, and being the best resemblance of, nonentity.—HUME.

[v] *But I should ill become this throne.*

The whole speech, from this line, is wonderfully beautiful in every respect. But

And this imperial sovranty, adorn'd
With splendour, arm'd with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more, as he above the rest
High honour'd sits? Go, therefore, mighty powers,
Terrour of heaven, though fallen! intend at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render hell
More tolerable: if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion. Intermit no watch
Against a wakeful Foe; while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all: this enterprize
None shall partake with me. Thus saying rose
The monarch, and prevented all reply;
Prudent, lest from his resolution raised
Others among the chief might offer now,
Certain to be refused, what erst they fear'd;
And so refused might in opinion stand
His rivals; winning cheap the high repute,
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more the adventure, than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose:
Their rising all at once [w] was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone; and as a god
Extol him equal to the Highest in heaven.
Nor fail'd they to express how much they praised,
That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither do the spirits damn'd

the reason why I have quoted it, is, to show how the poet supports Satan's

Monarchal pride, conscious of highest worth,

as he expresses it. In the line

But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,

I have no doubt but he had in view the speech of Sarpedon in Homer; in which indeed the thought is Homer's, "That a king, being most honoured, should likewise expose himself most to danger." But Milton has given it so much of the rhetorical cast, and dressed it so up with sentences and enthymemas, after the manner of Demosthenes, who, as I have said elsewhere, was his model for speeches, that Homer is hardly to be found in it.—MONBODDO.

[w] *Their rising all at once.*

The rising of this great assembly is described in a very sublime and poetical manner.—ADDISON.

Lose all their virtue[x]; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition varnish'd o'er with zeal.
Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief:
As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the north wind sleeps[y], o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face; the louring element
Scowls o'er the darken'd landskip snow, or shower:
If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds; men only disagree[z].
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace; and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if, which might induce us to accord,
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait.
 The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth
In order came the grand infernal peers:
Midst came their mighty paramount[a], and seem'd
Alone the antagonist of Heaven; nor less
Than hell's dread emperour, with pomp supreme
And God-like imitated state: him round
A globe of fiery seraphim inclosed
With bright emblazonry and horrent arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpets' regal sound the great result:
Towards the four winds four speedy cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By herald's voice explain'd: the hollow abyss
Heard far and wide: and all the host of hell
With deafening shout return'd them loud acclaim.
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the ranged powers

[x] *Neither do the spirits damn'd*
Lose all their virtue.

This seems to have been a sarcasm on the bad men of Milton's time.

[y] *While the north wind sleeps.*

A simile of perfect beauty: it illustrates the delightful feeling resulting from the contrast of the stormy debate with the light that seems subsequently to break in upon the assembly.

[z] *Men only disagree.*

This has allusion to the contentious age in which Milton lived and wrote. —THYER.

[a] *Midst came their mighty paramount.*

Here Satan's pre-eminence is described with a mighty splendour.

Disband; and, wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplex'd; where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great chief return.
Part, on the plain[b], or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
As at the Olympian games, or Pythian fields:
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form.
As when to warn proud cities war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battel in the clouds[c], before each van
Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears
Till thickest legions close: with feats of arms
From either end of heaven the welkin burns.
Others, with vast Typhœan rage more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind: hell scarce holds the wild uproar.
As when Alcides, from Œchalia crown'd
With conquest, felt the envenom'd robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines;
And Lichas from the top of Œta threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battel; and complain that fate
Free virtue should inthral to force or chance.
Their song was partial; but the harmony,
What could it less when spirits immortal sing?
Suspended hell[d], and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
(For eloquence the soul[e], song charms the sense),
Others apart sat on a hill retired,

[b] *Part, on the plain.*

The diversions of the fallen angels, with the particular account of their place of habitation, are described with great pregnancy of thought and copiousness of invention. The diversions are every way suitable to beings who had nothing left them but strength and knowledge misapplied. Such are their contentions at the race, and in feats of arms, with their entertainments at v. 539, &c.

Their music is employed in celebrating their own criminal exploits; and their discourse, in sounding the unfathomable depths of fate, free will, and foreknowledge. —ADDISON.

[c] *Armies rush*
To battel in the clouds.

Another image of sublime poetry.

[d] *Suspended hell.*

The effect of their singing is somewhat like that of Orpheus in hell, Virg. Georg. iv. 481.—NEWTON.

[e] *For eloquence the soul.*

Here is the preference given to intellect above the pleasures of the senses.

In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate[f];
Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute:
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame;
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy:
Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope; or arm the obdured breast
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps,
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers[g], that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams:
Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron, of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegethon,
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth; whereof who drinks,
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies, dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind, and dire hail which on firm land
Thaws not; but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile: all else deep snow and ice;

[f] *Foreknowledge, will, and fate.*

The turn of the words here is admirable, and very well expresses the wanderings and mazes of their discourse: and the turn of the words is greatly improved, and rendered still more beautiful, by the addition of an epithet to each of them.—NEWTON.

[g] *Along the banks*
Of four infernal rivers.

The several circumstances in the description of hell are finely imagined; as the four rivers which disgorge themselves into the sea of fire, the extremes of cold and heat, and the river of oblivion. The monstrous animals produced in that infernal world are represented by a single line, which gives us a more horrid idea of them than a much longer description would have done:—

worse
Than fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceived.

This episode of the fallen spirits, and their place of habitation, comes in very happily to unbend the mind of the reader from its attention to the debate. An ordinary poet would indeed have spun out so many circumstances to a great length, and by that means have weakened, instead of illustrated, the principal fable.—ADDISON.

A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
Betwixt Damiata and mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air
Burns frore[h], and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither by harpy-footed furies haled,
At certain revolutions all the damn'd
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce:
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth; and there to pine
Immovable, infix'd, and frozen round,
Periods of time; thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness[i] all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink:
But Fate withstands, and to oppose the attempt
Medusa with Gorgonian terrour guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands,
With shuddering horrour pale, and eyes aghast,
View'd first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest; through many a dark and dreary vale
They pass'd, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves[j], lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and hydras, and chimæras dire.

[h] *Burns frore.*

See Ecclus. xlii. 20, 21: "When the cold north-wind bloweth, it devoureth the mountains, and *burneth* the wilderness, and consumeth the grass *as fire*."—NEWTON.

[i] *In sweet forgetfulness.*

This is a fine allegory, to show that there is no forgetfulness in hell. Memory makes a part of the punishment of the damned, and the reflection but increases their misery.—NEWTON.

[j] *Rocks, caves, &c.*

Milton's are the

Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of *death*;

and the idea, caused by a word, which nothing but a word could annex to the others, raises a very great degree of the sublime; which is raised yet higher by what follows, A UNIVERSE OF DEATH.—BURKE.

Meanwhile the adversary of God and man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of hell[k]
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scours the right-hand coast, sometimes the left;
Now shaves with level wing the deep, then soars
Up to the fiery concave towering high.
As when far off at sea[l] a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs: they on the trading flood
Through the wide Æthiopian to the Cape
Ply, stemming nightly toward the pole: so seem'd
Far off the flying fiend. At last appear
Hell bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates: three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire[m],
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat[n]
On either side a formidable shape;
The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast, a serpent arm'd
With mortal sting: about her middle round
A cry of hell-hounds never ceasing bark'd
With wide Cerberean mouths, full loud, and rung
A hideous peal: yet when they list, would creep,
If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there; yet there still bark'd and howl'd
Within unseen. Far less abhorr'd than these
Vex'd Scylla bathing, in the sea that parts

[k] *Toward the gates of hell.*

The flight of Satan to the gates of hell is finely imagined.—ADDISON.

[l] *As when far off at sea.*

Satan "towering high," is here compared to a fleet of Indiamen discovered at a distance, as it were "hanging in the clouds," as a fleet at a distance seems to do. This is the whole of the comparison; but, as Dr. Pearce observes, Milton in his similitudes (as is the practice of Homer and Virgil too), after he has shown the common resemblance, often takes the liberty of wandering into some unresembling circumstances; which have no other relation to the comparison than that it gave him the hint, and as it were set fire to the train of his imagination.—NEWTON.

[m] *Impaled with circling fire.*

Perhaps Milton might take the hint of this circumstance from his favourite romances, where we frequently meet with the gates of enchanted castles thus *impaled with circling fire.*—THYER.

[n] *Before the gates there sat.*

Here begins the famous allegory of Milton, which is a sort of paraphrase on St. James, i. 15:—"Then, when Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death." The first part of the allegory says only, that Satan's intended voyage was dangerous to his being, and that he resolved however to venture.—RICHARDSON.

Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore:
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, call'd
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood[o], to dance
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon[p]
Eclipses at their charms. The other shape[q],
If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,
For each seem'd either; black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast,
With horrid strides; hell trembled as he strode.
The undaunted fiend what this might be admired;
Admired, not fear'd: God and his Son except,
Created thing[r] nought valued he, nor shunn'd;
And with disdainful look thus first began:—
Whence and what art thou[s], execrable shape,

[o] *Lured with the smell of infant blood.*

Here is a mixture of classical and demonological learning. Compare Æschylus, "Eumenid." 246, ed. Schütz.; and Wierus, "De Lamiis," 4to. 1852, coll. 210, 241. —TODD.

[p] *The labouring moon.*

The ancients believed the moon greatly affected by magical practices; and the Latin poets call the eclipses of the moon, *labores lunæ.* The three foregoing lines, and the former part of this, contain a short account of what was once believed, and in Milton's time not so ridiculous as now.—RICHARDSON.

[q] *The other shape.*

See Spenser, F. Q. VII. vii. 46.—THYER.

[r] *God and his Son except,*
Created thing.

The commentators try in vain to justify this ungrammatical expression.

[s] *Whence and what art thou?*

Milton has interwoven in the texture of his fable some particulars which do not seem to have probability enough for an epic poem; particularly in the actions which he ascribes to Sin and Death, and the picture which he draws of the limbo of Vanity, with other passages in the second book. Such allegories rather savour of the spirit of Spenser and Ariosto, than of Homer and Virgil.

It is, however, a very finished piece of its kind, when it is not considered as a part of an epic poem. The genealogy of the several persons is contrived with great delicacy: Sin is the daughter of Satan, and Death the offspring of Sin: the incestuous mixture between Sin and Death produces those monsters and hell-hounds, which from time to time enter into their mother, and tear the bowels of her who gave them birth: these are the terrors of an evil conscience, and the proper fruits of Sin, which naturally rise from the apprehensions of death. This last beautiful moral is, I think, clearly intimated in the speech of Sin, where, complaining of this her dreadful issue, she adds:—

Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe; who sets them on,
And me, his parent, would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved.

I need not mention to the reader the beautiful circumstance in the last part of this

That darest, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave ask'd of thee:
Retire, or taste thy folly; and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of heaven!
To whom the goblin full of wrath replied:—
Art thou that traitor angel, art thou he,
Who first broke peace in heaven, and faith, till then
Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of heaven's sons
Conjured against the Highest; for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemn'd
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon'st thou thyself with spirits of heaven,
Hell-doom'd, and breathest defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
Thy king and lord! Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings;
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horrour seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.
So spake the grisly terrour; and in shape,
So speaking, and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform: on the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burn'd[t],
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Level'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend; and such a frown
Each cast at the other, as when two black clouds,

quotation: he will likewise observe how naturally the three persons concerned in this allegory are tempted, by one common interest, to come into a confederacy together: and how properly Sin is made the portress of hell, and the only being that can open the gates of that world of tortures.

The descriptive part of this allegory is likewise very strong, and full of sublime ideas. The figure of Death, the regal crown upon his head, the menace of Satan, his advancing to the combat, the outcry at his birth, are circumstances too noble to be passed over in silence, and extremely suitable to this king of terrors. I need not mention the justness of thought which is observed in the generation of these several symbolical persons; that Sin was produced upon the first revolt of Satan, that Death appeared soon after he was cast into hell, and that the terrors of conscience were conceived at the gate of this place of torments. The description of the gates is very poetical, as the opening of them is full of Milton's spirit.—ADDISON.

Addison seems to have been strangely nice in the objection to the introduction of these shadowy beings into an epic poem; and so thought Dr. Newton.

[t] *And like a comet burn'd.*

The ancient poets frequently compare a hero in his shining armour to a comet. Poetry delights in omens, prodigies, and such wonderful events as were supposed to follow upon the appearance of comets, eclipses, and the like.—NEWTON.

With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian[u]; then stand front to front,
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid air;
So frown'd the mighty combatants, that hell
Grew darker at their frown; so match'd they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a Foe[v]: and now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all hell had rung,
Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat
Fast by hell gate, and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous outcry rush'd between.
O father, what intends thy hand, she cried,
Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father's head? and know'st for whom?
For Him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordain'd his drudge, to execute
Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids;
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both.
She spake, and at her words the hellish pest
Forebore; then these to her Satan return'd:—
So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand
Prevented spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends; till first I know of thee,
What thing thou art, thus double form'd; and why,
In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son:
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee.
To whom thus the portress of hell gate replied:
Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul, once deem'd so fair
In heaven? when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against heaven's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee; dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth; till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess arm'd,

[u] *Over the Caspian.*

With great judgment did the poet take this simile from the Caspian; for that sea is remarkably tempestuous. See "Purchas his Pilgrimes," part iii. p. 241: and Horace, Ode II. ix. 2.—BOWLE.

[v] *So great a Foe.*

Jesus Christ, who, as it follows v. 734, will one day destroy both Death, and "him that has the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. ii. 14.—NEWTON.

Out of thy head I sprung[w]: amazement seized
All the host of heaven; back they recoil'd afraid
At first, and call'd me Sin, and for a sign
Portentous held me: but, familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse; thee chiefly; who full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing
Becamest enamoured; and such joy thou took'st
With me in secret, that my womb conceived
A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
And fields were fought in heaven; wherein remain'd
(For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
Clear victory, to our part loss and rout
Through all the empyrean: down they fell
Driven headlong from the pitch of heaven, down
Into this deep, and in the general fall
I also; at which time this powerful key
Into my hand was given, with charge to keep
These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb,
Pregnant by thee and now excessive grown,
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transform'd: but he, my inbred enemy,
Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart
Made to destroy: I fled, and cried out *Death*;
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sigh'd
From all her caves[x], and back resounded *Death*.
I fled, but he pursued, though more, it seems,
Inflamed with lust than rage; and, swifter far,
Me overtook, his mother, all dismay'd;
And, in embraces forcible and foul
Ingendering with me, of that rape begot

[w] *Out of thy head I sprung.*

Sin is rightly made to spring out of the head of Satan, as Wisdom or Minerva did out of Jupiter's; and Milton describes the birth of the one very much in the same manner as the ancient poets have described that of the other, particularly the author of the "Hymn to Minerva," vulgarly ascribed to Homer: and what follows seems to be a hint improved upon Minerva's being ravished soon after her birth by Vulcan, as we may learn from Lucian, "Dial. Vulcani et Jovis," et "de Domo."—NEWTON.

[x] *From all her caves.*

Virgil, Æn. ii. 53.

Insonuere cavæ, gemitumque dedere, cavernæ.—HUME.

The repetition of *Death* here is a beauty of the same kind as that of the name of Eurydice in Virgil, Georg. iv. 525, and of Hylas, Ecl. vi. 44.—NEWTON.

But how infinitely more sublime!

These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw'st; hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me: for, when they list, into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl and gnaw
My bowels, their repast; then bursting forth
Afresh with conscious terrours vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on;
And me his parent would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved; and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
Whenever that shall be; so Fate pronounced.
But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,
Save he who reigns above, none can resist.
She finish'd, and the subtle fiend his lore
Soon learn'd, now milder, and thus answer'd smooth:—
Dear daughter[y], since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
Of dalliance had with thee in heaven, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befallen us, unforeseen, unthought of; know,
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain,
Both him and thee, and all the heavenly host
Of spirits, that, in our just pretences arm'd,
Fell with us from on high: from them I go
This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose; with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded deep, and through the void immense
To search with wandering quest a place foretold
Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created, vast and round, a place of bliss
In the purlieus of heaven, and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room; though more removed,
Lest heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret, now design'd, I haste
To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,

[y] *Dear daughter.*

Satan had now learned his lore or lesson; and the reader will observe how artfully he changes his language: he had said before that he had never seen "sight more detestable;" but now it is *dear daughter*, and *fair son*.—Newton.

And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom air, imbalm'd
With odours; there ye shall be fed and fill'd
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey.
He ceased, for both seem'd highly pleased, and Death
Grinn'd horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be fill'd, and bless'd his maw
Destined to that good hour: no less rejoiced
His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire:—
The key of this infernal pit by due,
And by command of heaven's all-powerful King,
I keep, by him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatch'd by living might.
But what owe I to his commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office, here confined,
Inhabitant of heaven and heavenly-born,
Here, in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrours and with clamours compass'd round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my authour, thou
My being gavest me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease; where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.
Thus saying, from her side the fatal key [a],
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up drew,
Which but herself not all the Stygian powers
Could once have moved: then in the keyhole turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens: on a sudden open fly

[a] *Thus saying, from her side the fatal key.*

It is one great part of the poet's art to know when to describe things in general, and when to be very circumstantial and particular. Milton has in these lines showed his judgment in this respect: the first opening of the gates of hell by Sin is an incident of that importance, that, if I can guess by my own, every reader's attention must be greatly excited, and consequently as highly gratified, by the minute detail of particulars our author has given us. It may with justice be farther observed, that in no part of the poem the versification is better accommodated to the sense. The drawing up of the portcullis, the turning of the key, the sudden shooting of the bolts, and the flying open of the doors, are in some sort described by the very break and sound of the verses.—THYER.

With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She open'd, but to shut
Excell'd her power[a]; the gates wide open stood,
That with extended wings a banner'd host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
With horse and chariots rank'd in loose array;
So wide they stood, and like a furnace mouth
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary deep[b]; a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth, and highth,
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night
And Chaos[c], ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand:
For hot, cold[d], moist, and dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battel bring
Their embryon atoms; they around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-arm'd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumber'd as the sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere,

[a] *She open'd, but to shut*
Excell'd her power.

The grandeur here both of the thought and the picture is incomparable.

[b] *The secrets of the hoary deep.*

This prospect, as the gates flow open, astonishes the imagination, and awakens all its curiosity.

[c] *Where eldest Night*
And Chaos.

All the ancient naturalists, philosophers, and poets, hold that Chaos was the first principle of all things; and the poets particularly make Night a goddess, and represent Night or darkness, and Chaos or confusion, as exercising uncontrolled dominion from the beginning. Thus Orpheus, in the beginning of his Hymn to Night, addresses her as the mother of the gods and men, and origin of all things. See also Spenser in imitation of the ancients, F. Q. I. v. 22. And Milton's system of the universe is, in short, that the empyrean heaven, and chaos, and darkness, were before the creation, heaven above and chaos beneath; and then, upon the rebellion of the angels; first, hell was formed out of chaos, stretching far and wide beneath; and afterwards heaven and earth, another world hanging over the realm of Chaos, and won from his dominion.—NEWTON.

[d] *For hot, cold, &c.*

Ovid. Met. i. 19:—

Frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia siccis,
Mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondus.

The reader may compare this whole description of Chaos with Ovid's, and he will easily see how the Roman poet has lessened the grandeur of his by puerile conceits and quaint antitheses: everything in Milton is great and masterly.—NEWTON.

He rules a moment[e]: Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more imbroils the fray,
By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,
The womb of nature, and perhaps her grave,—
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mix'd
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds;—
Into this wild abyss the wary fiend
Stood on the brink of hell[f], and look'd awhile,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less peal'd
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small), than when Bellona storms,
With all her battering engines bent to rase
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of heaven were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The stedfast earth. At last his sail-broad vans
He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke
Uplifted spurns the ground; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity: all unawares
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep; and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not by ill chance
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft: that fury stay'd,
Quench'd in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
Nor good dry land: nigh founder'd on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying[g]; behoves him now both oar and sail[h].
As when a gryphon, through the wilderness
With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale,

[e] *To whom these most adhere,*
He rules a moment.
To whatever side the atoms temporarily adhere, that side rules for the moment.

[f] *Stood on the brink of hell.*
Satan pauses for a moment, terrified at the danger of his enterprise.

[g] *Half on foot,*
Half flying.
Spenser, Faer. Qu. I. xi. 8:—
Half flying, and half footing in his haste.—NEWTON.

[h] *Behoves him now both oar and sail.*
It behoveth him now to use both his oars and his sails, as galleys do, according to the proverb,—*remis velisque*, with might and main.—HUME.

Pursues the Arimaspian, who, by stealth,
Had from his wakeful custody purloin'd
The guarded gold; so eagerly the fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare[i],
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence: thither he plies,
Undaunted to meet there whatever power
Or spirit of the nethermost abyss[j]
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies,
Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread[k]
Wide on the wasteful deep: with him enthroned
Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades[l], and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon[m]; Rumour next, and Chance,
And Tumult and Confusion all imbroil'd;
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.
  To whom Satan turning boldly, thus:—Ye powers,
And spirits of this nethermost abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy,
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm; but by constraint
Wandering this darksome desert,—as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,—
Alone, and without guide, half lost, I seek
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds

[i] *O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare.*

The difficulty of Satan's voyage is very well expressed by so many monosyllables as follow, which cannot be pronounced but slowly, and with frequent pauses.—NEWTON.

[j] *The nethermost abyss.*

Though the throne of Chaos was above hell, and consequently a part of the abyss was so, yet a part of that abyss was at the same time below hell; so far below, as that, when Satan went from hell on his voyage, he fell in that abyss ten thousand fathom deep; and the poet there adds, that if it had not been for an accident, he had been falling down there to this hour: nay, it was so deep, as to be illimitable, and where *highth is lost.* The abyss then, considered altogether, was nethermost in respect of hell, below which it was so endlessly extended.—PEARCE.

[k] *And his dark pavilion spread.*

Psalm xviii. 11:—"He made *darkness* his secret place, his *pavilion* round about him."—DUNSTER.

[l] *Orcus and Ades.*

Orcus for Pluto, and Ades for any dark place.—RICHARDSON.

[m] *Of Demogorgon.*

The very name of Demogorgon the ancients supposed capable of producing the most terrible effects, which they therefore dreaded to pronounce. He is mentioned as of great power in incantations.—NEWTON.

Confine with heaven; or if some other place,
From your dominion won, the ethereal King
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound: direct my course;
Directed, no mean recompense it brings,
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expell'd, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway,
Which is my present journey, and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night:
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge.
  Thus Satan; and him thus the anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
Answer'd: I know thee, stranger, who thou art;
That mighty leading angel, who of late
Made head against heaven's King, though overthrown.
I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; and heaven gates
Pour'd out by millions her victorious bands
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve,
That little which is left so to defend,
Encroach'd on still through your intestine broils
Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately heaven and earth, another world,
Hung o'er my realm, link'd in a golden chain [n]
To that side heaven from whence your legions fell:
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger: go, and speed:
Havock, and spoil, and ruin are my gain.
  He ceased; and Satan stay'd not to reply;
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renew'd
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire [o],

[n] *Link'd in a golden chain.*

There is mention made in Homer of Jupiter's golden chain, by which he can draw up the gods, and the earth, and sea, and the whole universe; but they cannot draw him down. See the passage at large in the beginning of the eighth book of the Iliad. It is most probably and ingeniously conjectured, that by this golden chain may be understood the superior attractive force of the sun, whereby he continues unmoved, and draws all the rest of the planets toward him: but whatever is meant by it, it is certain that our poet took from it the thought of *hanging the world by a golden chain.*—NEWTON.

[o] *Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire.*

To take in the full meaning of this magnificent similitude, we must imagine ourselves in Chaos, and a vast luminous body rising upward near the place where we are, so swiftly as to appear a continued track of light, and lessening to the view according to the increase of distance, till it end in a point, and then disappear; and all this must be supposed to strike our eye at one instant.—BEATTIE.

Into the wild expanse; and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environ'd; wins his way; harder beset
And more endanger'd than when Argo pass'd
Through Bosporus betwixt the justling rocks:
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunn'd
Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steer'd.
So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on, with difficulty and labour he;
But he once past, soon after, when man fell,
(Strange alteration!) Sin and Death amain
Following his track (such was the will of Heaven),
Paved after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endured a bridge [p] of wondrous length,
From hell continued, reaching the utmost orb
Of this frail world; by which the spirits perverse
With easy intercourse passed to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good angels guard by special grace.
But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of heaven
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn: here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire
As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less and with less hostile din;
That Satan, with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light [q];

Ibid. In Satan's voyage through Chaos there are several imaginary persons described, as residing in that immense waste of matter. This may perhaps be conformable to the taste of those critics who are pleased with nothing in a poet which has not life and manners ascribed to it; but, for my own part, I am pleased most with those passages in this description which carry in them a greater measure of probability, and are such as might possibly have happened: of this kind is his first mounting in the smoke that rises from the infernal pit; his falling into a cloud of nitre and the like combustible materials, that by their explosion still hurried him forward in his voyage; his springing upwards like a pyramid of fire; with his laborious passage through that confusion of elements, which the poet calls

The womb of nature, and perhaps her grave.

The glimmering light which shot into the Chaos from the utmost verge of the creation, and the distant discovery of the earth, that hung close by the moon, are wonderfully beautiful and poetical.—ADDISON.

[p] *Tamely endured a bridge.*

Dr. Newton here agrees with Dr. Bentley in censuring this introduction of the infernal bridge, because it is described in the tenth book, for several lines together, as a thing untouched before, and an incident to surprise the reader; and therefore the poet should not have anticipated it here. Milton is said to have apparently copied this bridge, not as Dr. Warton has conjectured, from the Persian poet Sadi, but from the Arabian fiction of the bridge, called in Arabic *Al Sirat*, which is represented to extend over the infernal gulf, and to be narrower than a spider's web, and sharper than the edge of a sword.—Pocock in Port. Mos. p. 282. See Annotations on Hist. of Caliph Vathek, 1786, p. 314.—TODD.

[q] *By dubious light.*

In this line, and in the preceding description of the "glimmering dawn" that Satan

And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorn'd
Of living sapphire, once his native seat;
And fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent world, in bigness as a star [r]
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

first meets with, Milton very probably alludes to Seneca's elegant account of Hercules's passage out of hell, Herc. Fur. 668:—

> Non cæca tenebris incipit prima via:
> Tenuis relictæ lucis a tergo nitor,
> Fulgorque dubius solis afflicti cadit. THYER.

[r] *This pendent world, in bigness as a star.*

By this pendent world is not meant the earth, but the new creation, heaven and earth, the whole orb of fixed stars immensely bigger than the earth, a mere point in the comparison. This is certain from what Chaos had lately said, v. 1004:—

> Now lately heaven and earth, another world,
> Hung o'er my realm, link'd in a golden chain.

Besides, Satan did not see the earth yet; he was afterwards surprised "at the sudden view of all this world at once," b. iii. 542, and wandered long on the outside of it, till at last he saw our sun, and learned there of the archangel Uriel, where the earth and paradise were. See b. iii. 722. This pendent world, therefore, must mean the whole world—the new-created universe; and "beheld far off," it appeared, in comparison with the empyreal heaven, no bigger than a "star of smallest magnitude," nay, not so large; it appeared no bigger than such a star appears to be when it is "close by the moon," the superior light whereof makes any star that happens to be near her disk to seem exceedingly small, and almost disappear.—NEWTON.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

Although the text has not been altered, the following discovery merits to be laid before the accurate readers of Milton.

Ver. 855. *Fearless to be o'ermatch'd by living might.*

Living *might* would not except even God himself, the Ever-living and the Almighty. The author therefore gave it "by living *wight*:" as in this same book, ver. 613:— "All taste of living *wight*." This expression is established and consecrated by our Chaucer and Spenser.—BENTLEY.

In confirmation of the doctor's happy conjecture, "living *wight*" is the reading of Simmon's third edition, 1678, and was probably a correction dictated by Milton, after the second edition was printed. This Dr. Bentley was not aware of.—See Ed. 1678, p. 53.

BOOK III.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I CANNOT admit this book to be inferior in poetical merit to those which precede it: the argumentative parts give a pleasing variety. The unfavourable opinion has arisen from a narrow view of the nature of poetry; from the theory of those who think that it ought to be confined to description and imagery. On the contrary, the highest poetry consists more of spirit than of matter. Matter is only good so far as it is imbued with spirit, or causes spiritual exaltation. Among the innumerable grand descriptions in Milton, I do not believe there is one which stands unconnected with complex intellectual considerations, and of which those considerations do not form a leading part of the attraction. The learned allusions may be too deep for the common reader; and so far the poet is above the reach of the multitude; but even then they create a certain vague stir in unprepared minds:—names indistinctly heard; visions dimly seen; constant recognitions of Scriptural passages, and sacred names, awfully impressed on the memory from childhood,—awaken the sensitive understanding with sacred and mysterious movements.

We do not read Milton in the same light mood as we read any other poet: his is the imagination of a sublime instructor: we give our faith through duty, as well as will. If our fancy flags, we strain it, that we may apprehend: we know that there is something which our conception ought to reach. There is not an idle word in any of the delineations which the bard exhibits; nor is any picture merely addressed to the senses. Everything therefore is invention;—arising from novelty or complexity of combination: nothing is a mere reflection from the mirror of the fancy.

Milton early broke loose from the narrow bounds of observation; and explored the trackless regions of air, and worlds of spirits,—the good and the bad. There his pregnant imagination embodied new states of existence; and out of Chaos drew form, and life, and all that is grand, and beautiful, and godlike: and yet he so mingled them up with materials from the globe in which we are placed, that it is an unpardonable error to say that "Paradise Lost" contains little applicable to human interests. The human learning and human wisdom contained in every page are inexhaustible.

On this account no other poem requires so many explanatory notes, drawn from all the most extensive stores of erudition.

Of classical literature, and of the Italian poets, Milton was a perfect master: he often replenished his images and forms of expression from Homer and Virgil, and yet never was a servile borrower. There is an added pleasure to what in itself is beautiful, from the happiness of his adaptations.

I do not doubt that what he wrote was from a conjunction of genius, learning, art, and labour; but the grand source of all his poetical conceptions and language was the Scripture.

I have defended the argumentative, as well as the imaginative parts of this poem. I use imaginative invention in its strict sense, to express that which consists of imagery. The argumentative may be equal invention;—but ideal or spiritual invention: every great poem must unite both in large proportions. There is great simplicity and plainness in the greater part of Milton's images taken separately;—the novelty and grandeur is in their position and association. When Satan beholds the pendent orb of this world floating in immense space, while numberless other globes are suspended in the same vacuity;—the sublimity of the picture is mainly caused by reflecting on the character of him, on whose sight this object breaks.

Spenser's subject was confined to human nature, represented by a moral allegory; but the manners which he undertook to describe were factitious; and he is often therefore over-coloured and extravagant; but Milton's subject allowed all the flights of the most gigantic and marvellous imagination: he never therefore offends probability; while we are often obliged to consider Spenser as merely sportive.

ARGUMENT.

GOD sitting on his throne sees Satan flying towards this world, then newly created; shows him to the Son, who sat at his right hand; foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind; clears his own justness and wisdom from all imputation, having created man free, and able enough to have withstood his tempter; yet declares his purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The Son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards man; but God again declares, that grace cannot be extended towards man without the satisfaction of divine justice; man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to Godhead, and therefore with all his progeny devoted to death must die, unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence, and undergo his punishment. The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for man; the Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in heaven and earth; commands all the angels to adore him; they obey, and, hymning to their harps in full quire, celebrate the Father and the Son. Meanwhile, Satan alights upon the bare convex of this world's outermost orb; where wandering he first finds a place, since called the Limbo of Vanity; what persons and things fly up thither; thence comes to the gate of heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it; his passage thence to the orb of the sun; he finds there Uriel, the regent of that orb; but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner angel; and, pretending a zealous desire to behold the new creation, and man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed; alights first on Mount Niphates.*

HAIL, holy Light[a]! offspring of heaven first born,
Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam,

* Milton having in the first and second books represented the infernal world with all its horrors, the thread of his fable naturally leads him into the opposite regions of bliss and glory.

If Milton's majesty forsakes him anywhere, it is in those parts of his poem where the divine persons are introduced as speakers. One may, I think, observe that the author proceeds with a kind of fear and trembling, whilst he describes the sentiments of the Almighty: he dares not give his imagination its full play, but chooses to confine himself to such thoughts as are drawn from the books of the most orthodox divines, and to such expressions as may be met with in Scripture. The beauties therefore which we are to look for in these speeches are not of a poetical nature; nor so proper to fill the mind with sentiments of grandeur, as with thoughts of devotion: the passions which they are designed to raise, are a divine love and religious fear. The particular beauty of the speeches in the third book consists in that shortness and perspicuity of style, in which the poet has couched the greatest mysteries of Christianity, and drawn together, in a regular scheme, the whole dispensation of Providence with respect to man. He has represented all the abstruse doctrines of predestination, free-will, and grace; as also the great points of incarnation and redemption (which naturally grow up in a poem that treats of the fall of man), with great energy of expression, and in a clearer and stronger light than I have ever met with in any other writer. As these points are dry in themselves to the generality of readers, the concise and clear manner in which he has treated them is very much to be admired; as is likewise the particular art which he has made use of in the interspersing of all those graces of poetry which the subject was capable of receiving. —ADDISON.

[a] *Hail, holy Light.*

This celebrated complaint, with which Milton opens the third book, deserves all the praises which have been given it, though it may rather be looked on as an excrescence

May I express thee unblamed? since God is light [b],
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity; dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear'st thou rather pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell [c]? before the sun,
Before the heavens thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite.
Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detain'd
In that obscure sojourn; while in my flight
Through utter and through middle darkness [d] borne,
With other notes than to the Orphean lyre,
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night;
Taught by the heavenly Muse to venture down
The dark descent, and up to reascend,
Though hard and rare: thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene hath quench'd their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song [e]; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath [f],
That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit; nor sometimes forget

than as an essential part of the poem. The same observation might be applied to that beautiful digression upon hypocrisy in the same book.—ADDISON.

Ibid. Our author's address to Light, and lamentation of his own blindness, may perhaps be censured as an excrescence or digression not agreeable to the rules of epic poetry; but yet this is so charming a part of the poem, that the most critical reader, I imagine, cannot wish it were omitted. One is even pleased with a fault that is the occasion of so many beauties, and acquaints us so much with the circumstances and character of the author.—NEWTON.

[b] *Since God is light.*

See 1 John i. 5; and 1 Tim. vi. 16.—NEWTON.

[c] *Whose fountain who shall tell?*

As in Job xxxviii. 19. "Where is the way where light dwelleth?"—HUME.

[d] *Through utter and through middle darkness.*

Through hell, which is often called *utter* darkness; and through the great gulf between hell and heaven, the *middle* darkness.—NEWTON.

[e] *Smit with the love of sacred song.*

So Virgil, Georg. ii. 475:

Dulces ante omnia Musæ,
Quarum sacra fero ingenti percussus amore.—NEWTON.

[f] *The flowery brooks beneath.*

Kedron and Siloah. He still was pleased to study the beauties of the ancient poets, but his highest delight was in the songs of Sion, in the holy Scriptures; and in these he meditated day and night. This is the sense of the passage stripped of its poetical ornaments.—NEWTON.

Those other two equal'd with me in fate,
So were I equal'd with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides[g],
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old:
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns[h]
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.
  Now had the Almighty Father from above,
From the pure empyrean where he sits
High throned above all highth, bent down his eye,
His own works and their works at once to view.
About him all the sanctities of heaven
Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
Beatitude past utterance[i]; on his right
The radiant image of his glory sat,
His only Son: on earth he first beheld
Our two first parents, yet the only two

[g] *Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides.*

Mæonides is Homer. Thamyris was a Thracian, and invented the Doric mood or measure. Tiresias and Phineus, the one a Theban, the other a king of Arcadia, famous blind prophets and poets of antiquity.—NEWTON.

[h] *Seasons return, but not to me returns.*

This beautiful turn of the words is copied from the beginning of the third act of Guarini's "Pastor Fido," where Martillo addresses the Spring:—

Tu torni ben, ma teco
Non tornano, &c.
Tu torni ben, tu torni,
Ma teco altro non torna, &c.—NEWTON.

[i] *And from his sight received*
Beatitude past utterance.

Milton here alludes to the *beatific vision*, in which divines suppose the happiness of the saints to consist.—THYER.

Sandys, in his Paraphrase on Job, has a similar passage:

Againe when all the radiant sonnes of light
Before his throne appear'd, whose only sight
Beatitude infused.—TODD.

Of mankind, in the happy garden placed,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
Uninterrupted joy, unrival'd love,
In blissful solitude: he then survey'd
Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there
Coasting the wall of heaven on this side night
In the dun air sublime, and ready now
To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet,
On the bare outside of this world, that seem'd
Firm land imbosom'd without firmament[j],
Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.
Him God beholding from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,
Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake:—
  Only-begotten Son[k], seest thou what rage
Transports our adversary? whom no bounds
Prescribed, no bars of hell, nor all the chains
Heap'd on him there, nor yet the main abyss
Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems
On desperate revenge, that shall redound
Upon his own rebellious head. And now,
Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way
Not far off heaven, in the precincts of light,
Directly towards the new-created world,
And man there placed; with purpose to assay
If him by force he can destroy, or, worse,
By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert:
For man will hearken to his glozing lies,
And easily transgress the sole command,
Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall,
He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
All he could have: I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all the ethereal powers
And spirits, both them who stood and them who fail'd:
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love?

[j] *Firm land imbosom'd without firmament.*

The universe appeared to Satan to be a solid globe, encompassed on all sides, but uncertain whether with water or air, but *without firmament*, without any sphere or fixed stars over it, as over the earth. The sphere, or fixed stars, was itself comprehended in it, and made a part of it.—NEWTON.

[k] *Only-begotten Son.*

I will make one general observation on this and all the speeches in the poem, put into the mouth of God the Father; which is, that nothing can be more unjust than Pope's criticism on Milton, accusing him of making "God turn school-divine," unless he meant by school-divinity the doctrine of St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, &c.: for Milton has copied them with the greatest exactness; and, bating a word or two (fully implied however in those writers), has kept to their very expressions.—STILLINGFLEET.

Where only, what they needs must do, appear'd,
Not what they would: what praise could they receive?
What pleasure I from such obedience paid?
When will and reason (reason also is choice),
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoil'd,
Made passive both, had served necessity,
Not me. They therefore, as to right belong'd,
So were created, nor can justly accuse
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate;
As if predestination over-ruled
Their will, disposed by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge: they themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass, authors to themselves in all,
Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
I form'd them free, and free they must remain,
Till they enthrall themselves; I else must change
Their nature, and revoke the high decree,
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordain'd
Their freedom: they themselves ordain'd their fall.
The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
Self-tempted, self-depraved: man falls deceived
By the other first: man therefore shall find grace,
The other none: in mercy and justice both,
Through heaven and earth, so shall my glory excel;
But mercy first and last shall brightest shine.
  Thus while God spake[1], ambrosial fragrance fill'd
All heaven, and in the blessed spirits elect
Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.
Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious; in him all his Father shone
Substantially express'd[m]; and in his face
Divine compassion visibly appear'd,
Love without end, and without measure grace;
Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake:—

[1] *Thus while God spake.*

Milton here shows that he was no servile imitator of the ancients. It is very well known that his master, Homer, and all who followed him, where they are representing the Deity speaking, describe a scene of terror and awful consternation. "The heavens, seas, and earth tremble," &c.; and this, to be sure, was consistent enough with their natural notions of the Supreme being: but it would not have been so agreeable to the mild, merciful, and benevolent idea of the Deity upon the Christian scheme; and therefore our author has very judiciously made the words of the Almighty diffusing fragrance and delight to all around him.—THYER.

[m] *Substantially express'd.*

See Heb. i. 3.—HUME.

O Father, gracious was that word which closed
Thy sovran sentence, that man should find grace;
For which both heaven and earth shall high extol
Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
Encompass'd shall resound thee ever bless'd.
For should man finally be lost? should man,
Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join'd
With his own folly? that be from thee far [n],
That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
Of all things made, and judgest only right.
Or shall the adversary thus obtain
His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfil
His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught;
Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,
Yet with revenge accomplish'd, and to hell
Draw after him the whole race of mankind,
By him corrupted? or wilt thou thyself
Abolish thy creation, and unmake,
For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?
So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
Be question'd and blasphemed without defence.
To whom the great Creator thus replied:—
O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
Son of my bosom, Son, who art alone
My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
As my eternal purpose hath decreed:
Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will;
Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
Freely vouchsafed: once more I will renew
His lapsed powers, though forfeit and enthral'd
By sin to foul exorbitant desires:
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe,
By me upheld; that he may know how frail
His fallen condition is, and to me owe
All his deliverance, and to none but me.
Some I have chosen [o] of peculiar grace,
Elect above the rest; so is my will:
The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd

[n] *That be from thee far.*

See Gen. xviii. 25.—NEWTON.

[o] *Some I have chosen.*

Our author did not hold the doctrine of rigid predestination: he was of the sentiments of the more moderate Calvinists; and thought that some indeed were elected of peculiar grace; the rest might be saved, complying with the terms and conditions of the Gospel.—NEWTON.

Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
The incensed Deity, while offer'd grace
Invites; for I will clear their senses dark,
What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
Though but endeavour'd with sincere intent,
Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut:
And I will place within them as a guide
My umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear,
Light after light, well used, they shall attain;
And to the end, persisting, safe arrive.
This my long sufferance and my day of grace[p]
They who neglect and scorn shall never taste;
But hard be harden'd, blind be blinded more,
That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;
And none but such from mercy I exclude.
But yet all is not done; man disobeying
Disloyal breaks his fealty, and sins
Against the high supremacy of Heaven,
Affecting Godhead, and so losing all,
To expiate his treason hath naught left;
But to destruction sacred and devote,
He with his whole posterity must die;
Die he or justice must: unless for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
Say, heavenly powers, where shall we find such love?
Which of you will be mortal to redeem
Man's mortal crime; and just the unjust to save?
Dwells in all heaven charity so dear?
He ask'd, but all the heavenly quire stood mute;
And silence was in heaven: on man's behalf
Patron or intercessor none appear'd;
Much less that durst upon his own head draw
The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
And now without redemption all mankind
Must have been lost, adjudged to death and hell
By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,
His dearest mediation thus renew'd:—
Father, thy word is pass'd; man shall find grace;
And shall grace not find means? that finds her way,

[p] *This my long sufferance and my day of grace.*

It is a great pity that our author should have thus debased the dignity of the Deity, by putting in his mouth this horrid doctrine of a day of grace, after which it is not possible for a man to repent; and there can be no sort of excuse for him, except the candid reader will make some allowance for the prejudices which he might possibly receive from the gloomy divinity of that enthusiastic age in which he lived.—THYER.

The speediest of thy winged messengers,
To visit all thy creatures, and to all
Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought;
Happy for man, so coming; he her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost;
Atonement for himself or offering meet,
Indebted and undone, hath none to bring.
Behold me then, me for him, life for life,
I offer: on me let thine anger fall;
Account me man; I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
Freely put off, and for him lastly die
Well pleased; on me let Death wreak all his rage;
Under his gloomy power I shall not long
Lie vanquish'd; thou hast given me to possess
Life in myself for ever; by thee I live,
Though now to Death I yield, and am his due
All that of me can die; yet that debt paid,
Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
For ever with corruption there to dwell[q]:
But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
My vanquisher, spoil'd of his vaunted spoil;
Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop,
Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarm'd.
I through the ample air in triumph high
Shall lead hell captive, maugre hell, and show
The powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
Pleased, out of heaven shalt look down and smile;
While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes,
Death last, and with his carcase glut the grave:
Then, with the multitude of my redeem'd,
Shall enter heaven long absent, and return,
Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
And reconcilement: wrath shall be no more
Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire.
His words here ended[r], but his meek aspect

[q] *With corruption there to dwell.*

Psalm xvi. 10. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;" applied to our Saviour's resurrection by St. Peter, Acts ii. 20, 21.—NEWTON.

[r] *His words here ended.*

What a charming and lovely picture has Milton given us of God the Son, considered as our Saviour and Redeemer!—not in the least inferior in its way to that grander one in the sixth book, where he describes him clothed with majesty and terror, taking vengeance of his enemies. Before he represents him speaking, he makes "divine compassion, love without end, and grace without measure, visibly to appear in his face," v. 140; and, carrying on the same amiable picture, makes him end it with a countenance "breathing immortal love to mortal men." Nothing could be better

Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience: as a sacrifice
Glad to be offer'd, he attends the will
Of his great Father. Admiration seized
All heaven, what this might mean and whither tend,
Wondering; but soon the Almighty thus replied:
O thou, in heaven and earth the only peace
Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou,
My sole complacence! well thou know'st how dear
To me are all my works; nor man the least,
Though last created; that for him I spare
Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
By losing thee awhile, the whole race lost.
Thou therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
Their nature also to thy nature join;
And be thyself man among men on earth,
Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,
By wondrous birth: be thou in Adam's room
The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.
As in him[a] perish all men, so in thee,
As from a second root, shall be restored,
As many as are restored; without thee none.
His crime makes guilty all his sons; thy merit
Imputed shall absolve them, who renounce
Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
Receive new life. So man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die;
And dying rise, and rising with him raise
His brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life.
So heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate
Giving to death, and dying to redeem;
So dearly to redeem what hellish hate
So easily destroy'd; and still destroys
In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume
Man's nature, lessen or degrade thine own,
Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss
Equal to God, and equally enjoying
God-like fruition, quitted all to save

contrived to leave a deep impression upon the reader's mind; and I believe one may venture to assert, that no art or words could lift the imagination to a stronger idea of a good and benevolent being. The mute eloquence which our author has so prettily expressed in his "silent yet spake," is with no less beauty described by Tasso, at the end of Armida's speech to Godfrey, c. iv. st. 65.

Ciò detto tace, e la risposta attende
Con atto, ch' en silentio hà voce, e preghi.—THYER.

[a] *As in him, &c.*

See 1 Cor. xv. 22.—NEWTON.

A world from utter loss; and hast been found
By merit more than birthright Son of God:
Found worthiest to be so by being good,
Far more than great or high. Because in thee
Love hath abounded more than glory abounds;
Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt
With thee thy manhood also to this throne;
Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign
Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
Anointed universal King. All power
I give thee; reign for ever, and assume
Thy merits; under thee, as head supreme[t],
Thrones, princedoms, powers, dominions, I reduce:
All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide
In heaven, or earth, or under earth in hell.
When thou attended gloriously from heaven
Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send
The summoning archangels to proclaim
Thy dread tribunal: forthwith from all winds
The living, and forthwith the cited dead
Of all past ages, to the general doom
Shall hasten: such a peal shall rouse their sleep.
Then, all thy saints assembled, thou shalt judge
Bad men and angels; they arraigned shall sink
Beneath thy sentence: hell, her numbers full,
Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Meanwhile
The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New heaven and earth, wherein the just shall dwell,
And after all their tribulations long
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
With joy and love triumphing and fair truth:
Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by,
For regal sceptre then no more shall need;
God shall be all in all. But, all ye gods,
Adore him, who to compass all this dies;
Adore the Son, and honour him as me.
  No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all
The multitude of angels with a shout[u],

[t] *Under thee, as head supreme.*

Here the speech begins to swell into a considerable degree of sublimity, and that of the purest and most perfect kind, in no way inconsistent with our most reverent ideas of the great Being who is the speaker, as he is portrayed to us in the Holy Scriptures.—DUNSTER.

[u] *With a shout.*

At this expression of angelic praise, it may be proper to give Addison's remarks unbroken upon the amazing colloquy which they had heard. The critic commences at ver. 56, and ends with ver. 415.

The survey of the whole creation, v. 56, and of everything that is transacted in it, is a prospect worthy of Omniscience; and as much above that in which Virgil has drawn Jupiter, as the Christian idea of the Supreme Being is more rational and sublime than that of the heathens. The particular objects on which he is described to have cast his eye are represented in the most beautiful and lively manner.

Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy; heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hosannas fill'd
The eternal regions. Lowly reverent
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns inwove with amarant and gold;
Immortal amarant, a flower which once
In paradise fast by the tree of life
Began to bloom; but soon for man's offence
To heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,
And flowers aloft shading the fount of life,
And where the river of bliss through midst of heaven
Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream;
With these, that never fade, the spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks inwreathed with beams;
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
Then crown'd again their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high;
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
Melodious part: such concord is in heaven.
  Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
Eternal King; thee, Authour of all being,
Fountain of light, thyself invisible
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st
Throned inaccessible; but when thou shadest
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,
Dark with excessive bright[v] thy skirts appear,
Yet dazzle heaven; that brightest seraphim
Approach not; but with both wings veil their eyes.
Thee next they sang of all creation first,

Satan's approach to the confines of the creation is finely imaged in the beginning of the speech which immediately follows. The effects of this speech in the blessed spirits, and in the Divine Person to whom it was addressed, cannot but fill the mind of the reader with a secret pleasure and complacency.

I need not point out the beauty of the circumstance, wherein the whole host of angels are represented as standing mute; nor show how proper the occasion was to produce such a silence in heaven. The close of this divine colloquy, and the hymn of angels which follows upon it, are wonderfully beautiful and poetical.—ADDISON.

[v] *Dark with excessive bright.*

Gray has imitated this, speaking of Milton,—

Blasted with excess of light.
Closed his eyes in endless night.

Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
In whose conspicuous countenance without cloud
Made visible the Almighty Father shines,
Whom else no creature can behold: on thee
Impress'd the effulgence of his glory abides;
Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests.
He heaven of heavens and all the powers therein
By thee created, and by thee threw down
The aspiring dominations: thou that day
Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,
Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels that shook
Heaven's everlasting frame; while o'er the necks
Thou drovest of warring angels, disarray'd.
Back from pursuit thy powers with loud acclaim
Thee only extoll'd, Son of thy Father's might,
To execute fierce vengeance on his foes;
Not so on man; him, through their malice fallen,
Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom
So strictly; but much more to pity incline.
No sooner did thy dear and only Son
Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail man
So strictly, but much more to pity inclined;
He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife
Of mercy and justice in thy face discern'd,
Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
Second to thee, offer'd himself to die
For man's offence. O unexampled love,
Love no where to be found, less than Divine!
Hail, Son of God! Saviour of men! Thy name
Shall be the copious matter of my song
Henceforth; and never shall my harp thy praise
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.
  Thus they in heaven, above the starry sphere,
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
Meanwhile upon the firm opacous globe
Of this round world, whose first convex divides,
The luminous inferiour orbs, inclosed
From Chaos and the inroad of Darkness old;
Satan alighted walks; a globe far off
It seem'd*, now seems a boundless continent,
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of night
Starless, exposed, and ever-threatening storms

* *A globe far off*
It seem'd.

Satan's walk upon the outside of the universe, which at a distance appeared to him of a globular form, but upon his nearer approach looked like an unbounded plain, is natural and noble; as his roaming upon the frontiers of the creation, between that mass of matter which was wrought into a world, and that shapeless unformed heap of materials which still lay in chaos and confusion, strikes the imagination with something astonishingly great and wild.—ADDISON.

Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky;
Save on that side, which from the wall of heaven,
Though distant far, some small reflection gains
Of glimmering air, less vex'd with tempest loud:
Here walk'd the fiend at large in spacious field.
As when a vulture[x] on Imaus bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
Dislodging from a region scarce of prey
To gorge the flesh of lambs, or yeanling kids
On hills where flocks are fed, flies towards the springs
Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams;
But in his way lights on the barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
With sails and wind[y] their cany waggons light:
So on this windy sea of land the fiend
Walk'd up and down alone, bent on his prey;
Alone, for other creature in this place,
Living or lifeless, to be found was none;
None yet, but store hereafter from the earth
Up hither like aërial vapours flew
Of all things transitory and vain, when sin
With vanity had fill'd the works of men:
Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
Built their fond hopes of glory, or lasting fame,
Or happiness in this or the other life;
All who have their reward on earth, the fruits
Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find
Fit retribution, empty as their deeds:
All the unaccomplish'd works of nature's hand,
Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mix'd,
Dissolved on earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
Till final dissolution wander here:
Not in the neighbouring moon, as some have dream'd;
Those argent fields more likely habitants,
Translated saints, or middle spirits hold
Betwixt the angelical and human kind:

[x] *As when a vulture.*

This simile is very apposite and lively, and corresponds exactly in all the particulars. Satan coming from hell to earth, in order to destroy mankind, but lighting first on the bare convex of the world's outermost orb, "a sea of land," as the poet calls it, is very fitly compared to a vulture flying in quest of his prey, tender lambs or kids new-yeaned, from the barren rocks to the more fruitful hills and streams of India; but lighting in his way on the plains of Sericana, which were in a manner "a sea of land" too; the country being so smooth and open, that carriages were driven (as travellers report) with sails and wind. Imaus is a celebrated mountain in Asia.—NEWTON.

[y] *Chineses drive*
With sails and wind.

Gray has caught the tone of this:

The dusky people drive before the gales.

Hither of ill-join'd sons[a] and daughters born
First from the ancient world those giants came
With many a vain exploit, though then renown'd:
The builders next of Babel on the plain
Of Sennaar, and still with vain design
New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build:
Others came single; he, who to be deem'd
A god, leap'd fondly into Ætna flames,
Empedocles; and he who, to enjoy
Plato's Elysium, leap'd into the sea,
Cleombrotus, and many more too long,
Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,
White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.
Here pilgrims roam, that stray'd so far to seek
In Golgotha Him dead, who lives in heaven;
And they, who to be sure of Paradise[a],
Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised;
They pass the planets seven, and pass the fix'd,
And that crystalline sphere[b] whose balance weighs
The trepidation talk'd, and that first moved:
And now Saint Peter at heaven's wicket seems
To wait them with his keys, and now at foot
Of heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo!
A violent cross wind from either coast
Blows them transverse ten thousand leagues awry
Into the devious air: then might ye see
Cowls, hoods, and habits with their wearers toss'd
And flutter'd into rags; then reliques, beads,
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
The sport of winds: all these upwhirl'd aloft,
Fly o'er the backside of the world far off,
Into a limbo large and broad[c], since call'd

[a] *Hither of ill-join'd sons.*

He means the *sons of God* ill joined with *the daughters of men*, alluding to that text of Scripture, Gen. vi. 4:—"There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them; the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown." Where, by the "sons of God," some Fathers and commentators have understood *angels*, as if the angels had been enamoured and married to women: but the true meaning is, that the posterity of Seth and other patriarchs, who were worshippers of the true God, and therefore called "the sons of God," intermarried with the idolatrous posterity of wicked Cain.—NEWTON.

[a] *And they, who to be sure of Paradise.*

This verse, and the two following, allude to a ridiculous opinion that obtained in the dark ages of popery; that, at the time of death, to be clothed in a friar's habit, was an infallible road to heaven.—BOWLE.

[b] *And that crystalline sphere.*

He speaks here according to the ancient astronomy, adopted and improved by Ptolemy.—NEWTON.

[c] *Into a limbo large and broad.*

The *limbus patrum*, as it is called, is a place that the schoolmen supposed to be in

The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
Long after, now unpeopled, and untrod.
All this dark globe the fiend found as he pass'd;
And long he wander'd till at last a gleam
Of dawning light turn'd thitherward in haste
His travel'd steps: far distant he descries,
Ascending by degrees magnificent
Up to the wall of heaven, a structure high;
At top whereof, but far more rich, appear'd
The work as of a kingly palace gate,
With frontispiece of diamond and gold
Imbellish'd; thick with sparkling orient gems
The portal shone, inimitable on earth
By model or by shading pencil drawn.
The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw
Angels ascending and descending, bands
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
To Padan-Aram in the field of Luz,
Dreaming by night under the open sky,
And waking cried, "This is the gate of heaven."
Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to heaven sometimes
Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flow'd
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from earth, sailing arrived,
Wafted by angels; or flew o'er the lake,
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.
The stairs were then let down; whether to dare
The fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss:
Direct against which open'd from beneath,
Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
A passage down to the earth, a passage wide;
Wider by far than that of after times
Over Mount Sion, and, though that were large,
Over the promised land to God so dear;
By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,
On high behests his angels to and fro
Pass'd frequent, and his eye with choice regard,
From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood,
To Beërsabâ, where the Holy Land
Borders on Ægypt and the Arabian shore:
So wide the opening seem'd, where bounds were set
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.

the neighbourhood of hell, where the souls of the patriarchs were detained, and those good men who died before our Saviour's resurrection. Our author gives the same name to his "Paradise of Fools," and more rationally places it beyond "the backside of the world."—NEWTON.

The "Limbo of Vanity" has been censured as unbecoming the dignity of the epic.

Satan from hence now on the lower stair,
That scaled by steps of gold to heaven gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this world at once. As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen; or some renown'd metropolis,
With glistering spires and pinnacles adorn'd,
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams:
Such wonder seized, though after heaven seen,
The spirit malign; but much more envy seized,
At sight of all this world beheld so fair.
Round he surveys[d] (and well might, where he stood
So high above the circling canopy
Of night's extended shade), from eastern point
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
Beyond the horizon: then from pole to pole
He views in breadth; and without longer pause
Downright into the world's first region throws
His flight precipitant; and winds with ease
Through the pure marble air his oblique way
Amongst innumerable stars, that shone
Stars distant, but nigh had seem'd other worlds,
Or other worlds they seem'd, or happy isles,
Like those Hesperian gardens, famed of old,
Fortunate fields, and groves and flowery vales,
Thrice happy isles; but who dwelt happy there
He stay'd not to inquire. Above them all,
The golden sun, in splendour likest heaven,
Allured his eye: thither his course he bends
Through the calm firmament; but up or down,
By centre or eccentric, hard to tell,
Or longitude, where the great luminary,
Aloof the vulgar constellations thick,
That from his lordly eye keep distance due,
Dispenses light from far; they as they move
Their starry dance in numbers that compute
Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
Turn swift their various motions; or are turn'd
By his magnetic beam, that gently warms

[d] *Round he surveys.*

He surveys the whole creation from east to west, and from north to south. But poetry delights to say the most common things in an uncommon manner. It is fine as it is natural, to represent Satan taking a view of the world before he threw himself into it.—NEWTON.

The universe, and to each inward part
With gentle penetration, though unseen,
Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep;
So wondrously was set his station bright.
There lands the fiend; a spot like which perhaps
Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb
Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw[*].
The place he found beyond expression bright,
Compared with aught on earth, metal or stone
Not all parts like, but all alike informed
With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire:
If metal, part seem'd gold, part silver clear;
If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,
Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone
In Aaron's breastplate; and a stone besides
Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen:
That stone, or like to that which here below
Philosophers in vain so long have sought;
In vain, though by their powerful art they bind
Volatil Hermes, and call up unbound
In various shapes old Proteus from the sea,
Drain'd through a limbeck to his native form.
What wonder then if fields and regions here
Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run
Potable gold; when with one virtuous touch,
The arch-chemic sun, so far from us remote,
Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed,
Here in the dark so many precious things,
Of colour glorious and effect so rare?
Here matter new to gaze the devil met
Undazzled; far and wide his eye commands:
For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,
But all sunshine. As when his beams at noon
Culminate from the equator, as they now
Shot upward still direct, whence no way round
Shadow from body opaque can fall; and the air,
No where so clear, sharpen'd his visual ray
To objects distant far; whereby he soon
Saw within ken a glorious angel stand.
The same whom John[f] saw also in the sun:
His back was turn'd, but not his brightness hid;
Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
Circled his head; nor less his locks behind

[*] *Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw.*

The spots in the sun are visible with a telescope; but astronomer perhaps never saw, "through his glazed optic tube," such a spot as Satan, now he was in the sun's orb. The poet mentions this glass the oftener in honour of Galileo, whom he means here by the astronomer.—NEWTON.

[f] *The same whom John.*

See Rev. xix. 17:—"And I saw an angel standing in the sun."—NEWTON.

Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings
Lay waving round: on some great charge employ'd
He seem'd, or fix'd in cogitation deep.
Glad was the spirit impure, as now in hope
To find who might direct his wandering flight
To Paradise, the happy seat of man,
His journey's end, and our beginning woe.
But first he casts to change his proper shape;
Which else might work him danger or delay:
And now a stripling cherub he appears,
Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
Suitable grace diffused, so well he feign'd;
Under a coronet his flowing hair
In curls on either cheek play'd; wings he wore
Of many a colour'd plume sprinkled with gold;
His habit fit for speed succinct; and held
Before his decent steps a silver wand.
He drew not nigh unheard; the angel bright,
Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turn'd,
Admonish'd by his ear; and straight was known
The archangel Uriel, one of the seven,
Who in God's presence nearest to his throne
Stand ready at command, and are his eyes
That run through all the heavens, or down to the earth
Bear his swift errands, over moist and dry,
O'er sea and land: him Satan thus accosts:—
  Uriel[s], for thou of those seven spirits that stand
In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright,
The first are wont his great authentic will
Interpreter through highest heaven to bring,
Where all his sons thy embassy attend;
And here art likeliest by supreme decree
Like honour to obtain, and as his eye
To visit oft this new creation round;
Unspeakable desire to see, and know
All these his wondrous works, but chiefly man,
His chief delight and favour, him for whom
All these his works so wondrous he ordain'd,
Hath brought me from the quires of cherubim
Alone thus wandering. Brightest seraph, tell
In which of all these shining orbs hath man
His fixed seat, or fixed seat hath none,
But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell;

[s] *Uriel.*

His name is derived from two Hebrew words, which signify *God is my light.* He is mentioned as a good angel in the second book of Esdras; and the Jews, and some Christians, conceive him to be an angel of light according to his name, and therefore he has, properly, his station in the sun.—Newton.

That I may find him, and, with secret gaze
Or open admiration, him behold,
On whom the great Creator hath bestow'd
Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces pour'd:
That both in him and all things, as is meet,
The universal Maker we may praise;
Who justly hath driven out his rebel foes
To deepest hell; and, to repair that loss,
Created this new happy race of men
To serve him better: wise are all his ways.
 So spake the false dissembler unperceived;
For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy[h], the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, through heaven and earth:
And oft, though wisdom wake[i], suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems; which now for once beguiled
Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held
The sharpest-sighted spirit of all in heaven:
Who to the fradulent impostor foul,
In his uprightness, answer thus return'd:—
 Fair angel, thy desire, which tends to know
The works of God, thereby to glorify
The great Work-master, leads to no excess
That reaches blame, but rather merits praise
The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
From thy empyreal mansion thus alone,
To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps,
Contented with report, hear only in heaven:
For wonderful indeed are all his works,
Pleasant to know[j], and worthiest to be all

[h] *Hypocrisy.*

What is said here of hypocrisy is censured as a digression; but it seems no more than is absolutely necessary; for otherwise it might be thought very strange, that the evil spirit should pass undiscovered by the archangel Uriel, the regent of the sun, and the sharpest-sighted spirit in heaven; and therefore the poet endeavours to account for it by saying, that hypocrisy cannot be discerned by man or angel; it is invisible to all but God, &c. But yet the evil spirit did not pass wholly undiscovered; for, though Uriel was not aware of him now, yet he found reason to suspect him afterwards from his furious gestures on the mount.—NEWTON.

The poet's recollection of his having been deluded by the matchless hypocrisy of Cromwell, might have inspired him with this admirable apology for Uriel.—HAYLEY.

[i] *And oft, though wisdom wake.*

He must be very critically splenetic indeed who will not pardon this little digressional observation. There is not in my opinion a nobler sentiment, or one more poetically expressed, in the whole poem. What great art has the poet shown in taking off the dryness of a mere moral sentence, by throwing it into the form of a short and beautiful allegory!—THYER.

[j] *Pleasant to know.*

This is one of those places where a negligence in metre is not only excusable, in

Had in remembrance always with delight:
But what created mind can comprehend
Their number; or the wisdom infinite
That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
I saw, when at his word the formless mass,
This world's material mould, came to a heap;
Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
Stood ruled; stood vast infinitude confined;
Till at his second bidding darkness fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.
Swift to their several quarters hasted then
The cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire;
And this ethereal quintessence [k] of heaven
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
That roll'd orbicular, and turn'd to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move;
Each had his place appointed, each his course;
The rest in circuit walls this universe.
Look downward on that globe, whose hither side
With light from hence, though but reflected, shines;
That place is earth, the seat of man; that light
His day, which else, as the other hemisphere,
Night would invade; but there the neighbouring moon,
So call that opposite fair star, her aid
Timely interposes; and her monthly round
Still ending, still renewing, through mid heaven,
With borrow'd light her countenance triform
Hence fills and empties to enlighten the earth;
And in her pale dominion checks the night.
That spot to which I point is Paradise,
Adam's abode; those lofty shades his bower:
Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires.
  Thus said, he turn'd; and Satan, bowing low,
As to superior spirits is wont in heaven,
Where honour due and reverence none neglects,
Took leave; and toward the coast of earth beneath,
Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success,
Throws his steep flight in many an aery wheel,
Nor stay'd, till on Niphates' top [l] he lights.

taking away monotony, but carries with it a dignity which no smoothness of verse could give it, the words being in almost the same order as in Scripture.—STILLINGFLEET.

[k] *And this ethereal quintessence.*

The four elements hasted to their quarters, but this fifth essence flew upward.—NEWTON.

[l] *On Niphates' top.*

The poet lands Satan on this mountain, says Hume, because it borders on Mesopotamia, in which the most judicious describers of Paradise place it.—DUNSTER.

Satan after having long wandered upon the surface, or utmost wall of the universe, discovers at last a wide gap in it, which led into the creation, and is described as the opening through which the angels pass to and fro into the lower world, upon their

errands to mankind. His sitting upon the brink of this passage, and taking a survey of the whole face of nature that appeared to him new and fresh in all its beauties, with the simile illustrating this circumstance, fills the mind of the reader with as surprising and glorious an idea as any that arises in the whole poem. He looks down into that vast hollow of the universe with the eye, or as Milton calls it in his first book, with the ken of an angel. He surveys all the wonders in this immense amphitheatre that lies between both the poles of heaven, and takes in at one view the whole round of the creation.

His flight between the several worlds that shined on every side of him, and the particular description of the sun, are set forth in all the wantonness of a luxuriant imagination. His shape, speech, and behaviour, upon his transforming himself into an angel of light, are touched with exquisite beauty. The poet's thought of directing Satan to the Sun, which in the vulgar opinion of mankind is the most conspicuous part of the creation; the placing in it an angel; is a circumstance very finely contrived, and the more adjusted to a poetical probability, as it was a received doctrine among the most famous philosophers, that every orb had its intelligence; and as an apostle in sacred writ is said to have seen such an angel in the sun. In the answer which this angel returns to the disguised evil spirit, there is such a becoming majesty as is altogether suitable to a superior being. The part of it in which he represents himself as present at the creation, is very noble in itself; and not only proper where it is introduced, but requisite to prepare the reader for what follows in the seventh book:—

> I saw, when at his word the formless mass,
> This world's material mould, came to a heap:
> Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
> Stood ruled; stood vast infinitude confined;
> Till at his second bidding Darkness fled,
> Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.

In the following part of the speech he points out the earth with such circumstances, that the reader can scarce forbear fancying himself employed on the same distant view of it.—ADDISON.

BOOK IV.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I BELIEVE that this book of the poem is a general favourite with readers: there are parts of it beautiful; but it appears to me far less grand than the books which precede it: it has, I think, not only less sublimity, but less poetical invention. It required less imagination to describe the garden of Eden than Pandæmonium or Chaos. Adam and Eve are—the one noble, the other lovely;—but still they are human beings, with human passions.

Some criticisms might be made both on the described scenery, and on the occupations of our first parents. The gardener's skill and labours do not seem very necessary or natural at the first spring of the earth's creation. The bard seems for the moment so far to have forgot himself as to attempt rivality with the picturesque inventions of mere human poets: there is not that compression and massy strength, which is the usual quality of Miltonic painting. Grandeur was Milton's element, not beauty or tenderness! Invention will only be found where the natural strength lies, not where it is sought by labour and art. Where Milton drew a giant, he invented;—where he drew beauty, he borrowed.

It has often been observed, that Satan is the hero of "Paradise Lost," not Adam; and this is true! Neither Adam nor Eve take a part sufficiently active and important.

ARGUMENT.

SATAN, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil, journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described, overleaps the bounds; sits in the shape of a cormorant on the Tree of Life, as the highest in the garden, to look about him. The garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve: his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall: overhears their discourse; thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of, under penalty of death; and thereon intends to found his temptation, by seducing them to transgress: then leaves them awhile, to know farther of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil spirit had escaped the deep, and passed at noon by his sphere in the shape of a good angel down to Paradise, discovered afterwards by his furious gestures in the mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest; their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the rounds of Paradise, appoints two strong angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping; there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers, prepares resistance, but, hindered by a sign from heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O, FOR that warning voice [a], which he who saw
The Apocalypse, heard cry in heaven aloud,

[a] *O, for that warning voice.*

The poet opens this book with a wish, in the manner of Shakspeare: "O, for a Muse of fire!" Prol. to Hen. V.; "O, for a falconer's voice!" Rom. and Juliet, a. ii. s. 2. And, in order to raise the horror and attention of his reader, he intro-

Then when the dragon, put to second rout,
Came furious down to be revenged on men,
'Woe to the inhabitants on earth!' that now,
While time was, our first parents had been warn'd
The coming of their secret foe, and 'scaped,
Haply so 'scaped his mortal snare; for now
Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,
The tempter ere the accuser of mankind,
To wreak on innocent frail man his loss
Of that first battel, and his flight to hell:
Yet not rejoicing in his speed [b], though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt; which nigh the birth,
Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish engine back recoils
Upon himself: horrour and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The hell within him; for within him hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly
By change of place: now conscience wakes despair
That slumber'd; wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be,
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad;
Sometimes towards heaven [c] and the full blazing sun,
Which now sat high in his meridian tower:
Then much revolving, thus in sighs began:—
O thou, that, with surpassing [d] glory crown'd,

duces his relation of Satan's adventures upon earth, by wishing that the same warning-voice had been uttered now at Satan's first coming, which St. John, who in a vision saw the Apocalypse, or revelation of the most remarkable events which were to befal the Christian church to the end of the world, heard when the dragon was put to second rout, Rev. xii. 12. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath."—NEWTON.

[b] *Yet not rejoicing in his speed.*

Satan was bold far off and fearless; and, as he drew nearer, was pleased with hoped success; but now he is come to earth to begin his dire attempt, he does not rejoice in it; his heart misgives him; horror and doubt distract him. This is all very natural.—NEWTON.

[c] *Sometimes towards heaven.*

All this passage is highly poetical and pathetic.

[d] *O thou, that, with surpassing.*

One of those magnificent speeches to which no other name can be given, than that it is supereminently Miltonic. This is mainly argumentative sublimity; in which I think that he is even still greater than in his splendid and majestic imagery. The alternations of this dreadful speech strike and move the mind like the changes of the tempest in a dark night, when the thunder and lightning roar and flash, and then intermit, and then redouble again.

Compare the opening speech in the Phœnissæ of Euripides; where Porson has remarked, that Milton had once intended to have written a tragedy, not an epic, and to have commenced it with this address to the Sun. It is only necessary to give the

Look'st from thy sole dominion like the God
Of this new world; at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminish'd heads; to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice; and add thy name,
O sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once—above thy sphere;
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in heaven against heaven's matchless King.
Ah, wherefore? he deserved no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks?
How due! yet all his good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice; lifted up so high,
I 'sdain'd subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burthensome; still paying, still to owe;
Forgetful what from him I still received;
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged: what burden then?
O, had his powerful destiny ordain'd
Me some inferiour angel, I had stood
Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised
Ambition! Yet why not? some other power
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part; but other powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
Or from without, to all temptations arm'd.
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
Thou hadst: whom hast thou then or what to accuse,
But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
Be then his love accursed; since love or hate,
To me alike, it deals eternal woe:
Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide;
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.

Professor's authority:—"These verses, several years before the poem was begun, were shown to me, and some others, as designed for the very beginning of a tragedy upon this subject."—EDWARD PHILIPS.

O, then at last relent: is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the spirits beneath; whom I seduced
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit; boasting I could subdue
The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain;
Under what torments inwardly I groan;
While they adore me on the throne of hell:
With diadem and sceptre high advanced,
The lower still I fall; only supreme
In misery: such joy ambition finds.
But say I could repent, and could obtain
By act of grace my former state; how soon
Would highth recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feign'd submission swore! Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
For never can true reconcilement grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep;
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
Short intermission bought with double smart.
This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
From granting he, as I from begging peace:
All hope excluded thus; behold, instead
Of us outcast, exiled, his new delight,
Mankind, created, and for him this world.
So farewell hope, and with hope, farewell, fear;
Farewell, remorse: all good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my good; by thee at least
Divided empire with heaven's King I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
As man ere long and this new world[e] shall know.
  Thus while he spake, each passion dimm'd his face[f]
Thrice changed with pale, ire, envy, and despair;

[e] *This new world.*

Satan being now within prospect of Eden, and looking round upon the glories of the creation, is filled with sentiments different from those which he discovered whilst he was in hell. The place inspires him with thoughts more adapted to it. He reflects upon the happy condition from whence he fell, and breaks forth into a speech that is softened with several transient touches of remorse and self-accusation; but at length he confirms himself in impenitence, and in his design of drawing man into his own state of guilt and misery. This conflict of passions is roused with a great deal of art, as the opening of his speech to the Sun is very bold and noble.

This speech is, I think, the finest that is ascribed to Satan in the whole poem.—ADDISON.

[f] *Each passion dimm'd his face.*

Each passion, ire, envy, and despair, dimm'd his countenance, which was thrice

Which marr'd his borrow'd visage, and betray'd
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld:
For heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware
Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud; and was the first
That practised falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couch'd with revenge:
Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel once warn'd; whose eye pursued him down
The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount
Saw him disfigured more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce
He mark'd and mad demeanour, then alone,
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.
So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champain head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied; and overhead up grew
Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene; and, as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up sprung;
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighbouring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
Appear'd, with gay enamel'd colours mix'd:
On which the sun more glad impress'd his beams,
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath shower'd the earth; so lovely seem'd
That landskip: and of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy[g], able to drive
All sadness but despair: now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense

changed with pale through the successive agitations of these three passions: for, that paleness is the proper hue of envy and despair, everybody knows; and we always reckon that sort of anger the most deadly and diabolical which is accompanied with a pale, livid countenance.—NEWTON.

[g] *Vernal delight and joy.*

So in Milton's 'Tractate of Education:' "In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out, and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth."—TODD.

Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole[h]
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are pass'd
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabæan odours[i] from the spicy shore
Of Araby the bless'd; with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
Cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles:
So entertain'd those odorous sweets the fiend
Who came their bane; though with them better pleased
Than Asmodëus[j] with the fishy fume,
That drove him, though enamour'd, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to Ægypt, there fast bound.
Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill
Satan had journey'd on, pensive and slow;
But farther way found none; so thick entwined,
As one continued brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplex'd
All path of man or beast that pass'd that way.
One gate there only was, and that look'd east
On the other side: which when the arch-felon saw,
Due entrance he disdain'd; and in contempt,
At one slight bound high overleap'd all bound
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve
In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold:
Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
Cross'd-barr'd and bolted fast, fear no assault,
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles:
So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold;
So since into his church lewd hirelings climb.
Thence up he flew; and on the Tree of Life,

[h] *Whisper whence they stole.*

This expression of the air's stealing and dispersing the sweets of flowers, is very common in the best Italian poets.—NEWTON.

[i] *Sabæan odours.*

Wakefield says that Milton delineated this beautiful description from Diodorus Siculus, lib. iii. 46, where the aromatic plants in Sabea, or Arabia Felix, are described as yielding "inexpressible fragrance to the senses, not unenjoyed even by the navigator, though he sails by at a great distance from the shore: for, in the spring, when the wind blows off land, the odour from the aromatic trees and plants diffuses itself over all the neighbouring sea." Notes on *Gray*, p. 10.—TODD.

[j] *Asmodëus.*

This history of Asmodeus has by no means a good effect.—DUNSTER.

The middle tree and highest[k] there that grew,
Sat like a cormorant; yet not true life
Thereby regain'd, but sat devising death
To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant[l], but only used
For prospect, what well used had been the pledge
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him; but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
Beneath him with new wonder now he views,
To all delight of human sense exposed,
In narrow room, Nature's whole wealth, yea, more,
A heaven on earth: for blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was[m], by him in the east
Of Eden planted; Eden stretch'd her line
From Auran eastward to the royal towers
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings;
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar. In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordain'd:
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold; and next to Life,
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by,
Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill.
Southward through Eden[n] went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Pass'd underneath ingulf'd; for God had thrown
That mountain as his garden mould, high raised
Upon the rapid current, which through veins

[k] *The middle tree and highest.*

"The tree of life also in the midst of the garden," Gen. ii. 9. "In the midst" is a Hebrew phrase, expressing not only the local situation of this enlivening tree, but denoting its excellency, as being the most considerable, the tallest, goodliest, and most lovely tree in that beauteous garden planted by God himself. See Rev. ii. 7.—HUME.

[l] *Of that life-giving plant.*

He should have taken occasion, from thence, to reflect duly on life and immortality, and thereby to have put himself in a condition to regain true life and a happy immortality.—NEWTON.

[m] *Of God the garden was.*

So the sacred text, Gen. ii. 8. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden," that is, eastward of the place where Moses wrote his history, though Milton says, "in the east of Eden;" and then we have, in a few lines, our author's topography of Eden.—NEWTON.

[n] *Southward through Eden.*

This is, most probably, the river formed by the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris, which flows *southward*, and must needs be *a river large* by the joining of two such mighty rivers. Upon this river it is supposed, by the best commentators, that the terrestrial Paradise was situated. Milton calls this river Tigris in b. ix. 71.—NEWTON.

Of porous earth with kindly thirst up drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Water'd the garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears;
And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country, whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how, if art could tell,
How from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy errour under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise; which not nice art
In beds and curious knots, but nature boon
Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain;
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrown'd the noontide bowers. Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view:
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
Others, whose fruit, burnish'd with golden rind,
Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only, and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed;
Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store;
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant: meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crown'd
Her crystal mirrour holds, unite their streams.
The birds their quire apply; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves; while universal Pan°,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on the eternal spring. Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers,

° *While universal Pan.*

While universal Nature, linked with the graceful Seasons, danced a perpetual round, and throughout the earth, yet unpolluted, led eternal spring. All the poets favour the opinion of the world's creation in the spring. See Virgil, Georg. ii. 338, and Ovid, Met. i. 107. That the Graces were taken for the beautiful Seasons, in which all things seem to dance and smile with an universal joy, is plain from Horace, Od. iv. vii. 1., &c. And Homer joins both the Graces and Hours hand in hand with Harmony, Youth, and Venus, in his Hymn to Apollo.—HUME.

Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world; nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes, and the inspired
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye;
Nor where Abassin kings their issue guard,
Mount Amara[p], though this by some supposed
True Paradise, under the Æthiop line[q]
By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian garden, where the fiend
Saw, undelighted, all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.
  Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty, seem'd lords of all;
And worthy seem'd: for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed;
Whence true authority in men: though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal, seem'd;
For contemplation he and valour form'd,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
She, as a veil, down to the slender waist
Her unadorned golden tresses[r] wore
Dishevel'd, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils; which implied

[p] *Mount Amara.*

Mount Amara is the modern name of what the ancients called Pylæ, which are high hills in Ethiopia, under the equator. Between these hills there is a plain abounding with the rich and beautiful productions of nature, and highly ornamented with the various operations of art. In this place the kings of Abyssinia keep their children wonderfully confined; and when a king dies, he that is to succeed him is brought thence and set upon the throne.—MASSEY.

[q] *Under the Æthiop line.*

See Purchas's "Pilgrimage," 1626, vol. v. p. 743.—TODD.

[r] *Golden tresses.*

This sort of hair was most admired and celebrated by the ancients. Milton's widow had hair of this colour.—NEWTON.

Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received,
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then conceal'd;
Then was not guilty shame: dishonest shame
Of nature's works, honour dishonourable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
And banish'd from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence!
So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight
Of God or angel, for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met;
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade[a], that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain side
They sat them down; and, after no more toil
Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed
To recommend cool zephyr, and made ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper fruits they fell,
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat reclined
On the soft downy bank damask'd with flowers.
The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream:
Nor gentle purpose nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
Fair couple, link'd in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking play'd
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den:

[a] *Under a tuft of shade.*

Milton appears to me here to have obligations to a passage of the "Sarcotis" of Masenius. I must also observe, that Milton, where he is undoubtedly to be traced, still abounds in "those masterly beauties, and that exquisite colouring," which in other poets is a certain index of originality. But I conceive that when Milton in his vast and extensive reading met with any poetical idea that was congenial to his own vivid and tasteful imagination, he boldly seized it and considered it as his own, and worked upon it with the same noble confidence, undiminished by that sense of plagiarism, and unrestrained by those shackles of servile imitation, that mark the common "pecus imitatorum."—DUNSTER.

The truth is, that Milton almost always gave a new character to what he took. The similar passages so numerously pointed out by commentators are not similar in force and poetical spirit. Words simple or compound may be borrowed (as from Sylvester's "Du Bartas"), but the context and application are different. Just as the brick, which is taken from a cottage, may be worked into the walls of a palace; but is the architecture of the palace therefore taken from the cottage?—Many of the words used by Milton may be found in the most miserable poetasters of his predecessors.

Sporting the lion ramp'd, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambol'd before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass
Couch'd, and now fill'd with pasture gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declined, was hasting now with prone career
To the ocean isles, and in the ascending scale
Of heaven the stars that usher evening rose:
When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length fail'd speech [t] recover'd sad:—
O hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,
Not spirits, yet to heavenly spirits bright
Little inferiour; whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love; so lively shines
In them divine resemblance, and such grace
The hand that form'd them on their shape hath pour'd!
Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe;
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy;
Happy, but for so happy ill secured
Long to continue; and this high seat your heaven
Ill fenced for heaven to keep out such a foe
As now is enter'd; yet no purposed foe
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied. League with you I seek,
And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me
Henceforth: my dwelling haply may not please,
Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
Accept, your Maker's work: he gave it me,
Which I as freely give: hell shall unfold [u],
To entertain you two, her widest gates,

[t] *Scarce thus at length fail'd speech.*

Though Satan came in quest of Adam and Eve, yet he is struck with such astonishment at the sight of them, that it is a long time before he can recover his speech, and break forth into this soliloquy: and, at the same time, this dumb admiration of Satan gives the poet the better opportunity of enlarging his description of them. This is very beautiful.—NEWTON.

[u] *Hell shall unfold.*

Isaiah xiv. 9: "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth: it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations."—GILLIES.

And send forth all her kings: there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me loth to this revenge
On you, who wrong me not, for him who wrong'd.
And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do; yet public reason just,
Honour and empire with revenge enlarged,
By conquering this new world, compels me now[v]
To do, what else, though damn'd, I should abhor.
  So spake the fiend, and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.
Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
Down he alights among the sportful herd
Of those four-footed kinds; himself now one,
Now other, as their shape served best his end;
Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
To mark what of their state he more might learn,
By word or action mark'd: about them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
Straight couches close; then, rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both,
Griped in each paw: when Adam first of men,
To first of women Eve, thus moving speech,
Turn'd him all ear to hear new utterance flow:
  Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all; needs must the Power
That made us, and for us this ample world,
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite;
That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
In all this happiness; who at his hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge[w]; of all the trees

[v] *Compels me now.*

Necessity, the tyrant's plea.—NEWTON.

The same plea is said to have been Cromwell's apology for the murder of the king: for it is related that, on the evening of the execution of Charles, the arch-hypocrite walked round the corpse, as it lay in one of the rooms at Whitehall, muffled up in a long black cloak, and repeating to himself "Dreadful necessity!" See "Europ. Mag." vol. xx. p. 106, and the "Anecdotes of distinguished Persons," &c. vol. i. p. 254.—TODD.

[w] *This one, this easy charge.*

It was very natural for Adam to discourse of this; and this was what Satan wanted more particularly to learn: and it is expressed from God's command, Gen. ii. 16, 17. In like manner, when Adam says afterwards, "dominion given over all other creatures," it

In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only Tree
Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life;
So near grows death to life, whate'er death is;
Some dreadful thing no doubt: for well thou know'st
God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree;
The only sign of our obedience left
Among so many signs of power and rule
Conferr'd upon us; and dominion given
Over all other creatures that possess
Earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard
One easy prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
Unlimited of manifold delights:
But let us ever praise him, and extol
His bounty; following our delightful task
To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers;
Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet.
To whom thus Eve replied:—O thou, for whom
And from whom I was form'd, flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my guide
And head; what thou hast said is just and right:
For we to him indeed all praises owe,
And daily thanks: I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst no where find.
That day I oft remember[x], when from sleep
I first awaked, and found myself reposed
Under a shade on flowers; much wondering where
And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
Into a liquid plain; then stood unmoved,
Pure as the expanse of heaven: I thither went
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake[y], that to me seem'd another sky.

is taken from the divine commission, Gen. i. 28. These things are so evident, that it is almost superfluous to mention them. If we take notice of them, it is that every reader may be sensible how much of Scripture our author has wrought into this divine poem. —NEWTON.

[x] *That day I oft remember.*

From this, as well as several other passages in the poem, it appears that the poet supposes Adam and Eve to have been created, and to have lived many days in Paradise before the Fall. See b. iv. 639, 680, 712, and b. v. 31, &c.—NEWTON.

The whole of this passage is exquisitely tender, beautiful, and picturesque, in expression, as well as in imagery and sentiment.

[y] *To look into the clear*
Smooth lake.

This account that Eve gives of her coming to a lake, and there falling in love with her own image, when she had seen no other human creature, is much more probable

As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the watery gleam appear'd,
Bending to look on me: I started back,
It started back[a]; but pleased I soon return'd,
Pleased it return'd as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love: there I had fix'd
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warn'd me: What thou seest,
What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces; he
Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself; and thence be call'd
Mother of human race. What could I do,
But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall,
Under a plantain; yet, methought, less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth watery image. Back I turn'd:
Thou following criedst aloud, Return, fair Eve;
Whom fliest thou? whom thou fliest, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life; to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear.
Part of my soul, I seek thee, and thee claim,
My other half: with that thy gentle hand
Seized mine: I yielded: and from that time see
How beauty is excell'd by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.
So spake our general mother[a]; and with eyes

and natural, as well as more delicate and beautiful, than the famous story of Narcissus, in Ovid; from whom Milton manifestly took the hint, and has expressly imitated some passages; but has avoided all his puerilities, without losing any of his beauties; as the reader may easily observe by comparing both together (Met. iii. 457).—NEWTON.

I cannot help remarking how the story of Narcissus is improved by this application: the same might be said of almost every passage Milton has borrowed from the ancients. The improvement is so obvious in one main circumstance, that it seems needless to mention it: yet, as I do not remember that Mr. Addison has done it, I will just observe, that the want of probability, that Narcissus, who had lived in society, should be so far deceived as to take an image in the water for a reality, is here totally removed. We may apply to Milton on this occasion what Aristotle says of Homer, that he taught poets how to lie properly.—STILLINGFLEET.

[a] *I started back,*
It started back.

How admirably expressed!

[a] *So spake our general mother.*

What a charming picture of love and innocence has the poet given us in this paragraph! There is the greatest warmth of affection, and yet the most exact delicacy and decorum. One would have thought that a scene of this nature could not, with

Of conjugal attraction unreproved
And meek surrender, half-embracing lean'd
On our first father; half her swelling breast
Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid: he, in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
Smiled with superior love; as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
That shed May flowers; and press'd her matron lip
With kisses pure. Aside the devil turn'd
For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plain'd:
Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two,
Imparadised in one another's arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss; while I to hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
Among our other torments not the least,
Still unfulfill'd with pain of longing pines.
Yet let me not forget what I have gain'd
From their own mouths; all is not theirs, it seems:
One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge call'd,
Forbidden them to taste: knowledge forbidden[b]?
Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord
Envy them that? can it be sin to know?
Can it be death? and do they only stand
By ignorance? is that their happy state,
The proof of their obedience and their faith?
O fair foundation laid whereon to build
Their ruin! hence I will excite their minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design
To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with Gods; aspiring to be such,
They taste and die: what likelier can ensue?
But first with narrow search I must walk round
This garden, and no corner leave unspied;
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet
Some wandering spirit of heaven by fountain side,
Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw

any consistency, have been introduced into a divine poem; and yet our author has so nicely and judiciously covered the soft description with a veil of modesty, that the purest and chastest mind can find no room for offence. The meek surrender, and the half-embracement, are circumstances inimitable. An Italian's imagination would have hurried him the length of ten or a dozen stanzas upon this occasion, and with its luxuriant wildness changed Adam and Eve into a Venus and Adonis.—THYER.

[b] *Knowledge forbidden.*

This is artfully perverted by Satan, as if some useful and necessary knowledge was forbidden; whereas our first parents were created with perfect understanding; and the only knowledge that was forbidden was the knowledge of evil by the commission of it.—NEWTON.

What farther would be learn'd. Live while ye may[c],
Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures; for long woes are to succeed.
  So saying, his proud step he scornful turn'd,
But with sly circumspection, and began
Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale, his roam.
Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where heaven
With earth and ocean meets, the setting sun
Slowly descended, and with right aspect
Against the eastern gate of Paradise
Level'd his evening rays: it was a rock
Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
Accessible from earth, one entrance high;
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat[d],
Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night;
About him exercised heroic games
The unarm'd youth of heaven; but nigh at hand
Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,
Hung high with diamond flaming and with gold.
Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired
Impress the air, and show the mariner
From what point of his compass to beware
Impetuous winds: he thus began in haste:—
  Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given
Charge and strict watch, that to this happy place
No evil thing approach or enter in.
This day at highth of noon came to my sphere
A spirit, zealous, as he seem'd, to know
More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly man,
God's latest image: I described his way
Bent all on speed, and mark'd his aery gait;
But in the mount that lies from Eden north,
Where he first lighted, soon discern'd his looks
Alien from heaven, with passions foul obscured:
Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
Lost sight of him: one of the banish'd crew,
I fear, hath ventured from the deep, to raise

[c] *Live while ye may.*

This is one of those exclamations of Satan, while wavering in wickedness, and half-repenting his malicious designs on the happiness of innocent beings.

[d] *Gabriel sat.*

One of the archangels sent to show Daniel the vision of the four monarchies and the seventy weeks, Dan. vii ix.; and to the Virgin Mary, to reveal the incarnation of our Saviour, Luke i. His name in Hebrew signifies the *man of God*, or *the strength and power of God;* well posted as chief of the angelic guards placed about Paradise.—HUME.

New troubles; him thy care must be to find.
To whom the winged warriour thus return'd:
Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,
Amid the sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,
See far and wide: in at this gate none pass
The vigilance here placed, but such as come
Well known from heaven; and since meridian hour
No creature thence. If spirit of other sort,
So minded, have o'erleap'd these earthly bounds
On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
But if within the circuit of these walks
In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom
Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know.
So promised he; and Uriel to his charge
Return'd on that bright beam, whose point now raised
Bore him slope downwards to the sun, now fallen
Beneath the Azores; whether the prime orb,
Incredible how swift, hath thither roll'd
Diurnal; or this less volubil earth,
By shorter flight to the east, had left him there,
Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend.
Now came still evening on[e], and twilight gray[f]
Had in her sober livery all things clad:
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung[g];

[e] *Now came still evening on.*

This is the first evening in the poem; for the action of the preceding books lying out of the sphere of the sun, the time could not be computed. When Satan came first to the earth, and made that famous soliloquy at the beginning of this book, the sun was "high in his meridian tower;" and this is the evening of that day; and surely there never was a finer evening:—words cannot furnish out a more lovely description. The greatest poets in all ages have, as it were, vied one with another in their description of evening and night; but, for the variety of numbers and pleasing images, I know of nothing parallel or comparable to this to be found among all the treasures of ancient or modern poetry.—NEWTON.

This praise is not too high: the imagery consists of the most extraordinary union of richness, nature, and simplicity; and this is equally true of the expression.

[f] *Twilight gray.*

Milton is very singular in the frequent and particular notice which he takes of the *twilight*, whenever he has occasion to speak of the evening. I do not remember to have met with the same in any other poet; and yet there is, to be sure, something so agreeable in that soft and gentle light, and such a peculiar fragrance attends it in the summer months, that it is a circumstance which adds great beauty to his description. I have often thought that the weakness of our poet's eyes, to which this kind of light must be vastly pleasant, might be the reason that he so often introduces the mention of it.—THYER.

The two following lines of Mason were much admired by Gray:

While from the west, where sinks the crimson day,
Mock twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners gray.

[g] *Her amorous descant sung.*

Isaac Walton, in his "Complete Angler," has the following passage on the nightin-

Silence was pleased[h]: now glow'd the firmament
With living sapphires: Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.
When Adam thus to Eve: Fair consort, the hour
Of night, and all things now retired to rest,
Mind us of like repose; since God hath set
Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
Successive; and the timely dew of sleep,
Now falling with soft slumbrous weight, inclines
Our eyelids: other creatures all day long
Rove idle, unemploy'd, and less need rest:
Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his dignity,
And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
While other animals unactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account.
To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
With first approach of light, we must be risen,
And at our pleasant labour, to reform
Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,
Our walk at noon with branches overgrown,
That mock our scant manuring, and require
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth:
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
That lie bestrown, unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease;
Meanwhile, as nature wills, night bids us rest.
To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorn'd:
My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st
Unargued I obey; so God ordains.
God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.
With thee conversing, I forget all time;
All seasons, and their change, all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
Glistering with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
After soft showers; and sweet the coming on

gale:—"He that at midnight should hear, as I have often done, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling, of the nightingale's voice, might well be lifted above earth."—TODD.

[h] *Silence was pleased.*

This personification is taken, though it happens not to be observed by any of the commentators, from the "Hero and Leander" of Musæus, v. 280.—JOS. WARTON.

Of grateful evening mild; then silent night,
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
And these the gems of heaven, her starry train:
But neither breath of morn, when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glistering with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night,
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
Or glittering starlight, without thee is sweet.
But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?
 To whom our general ancestor replied:
Daughter of God and man, accomplish'd Eve,
Those have their course to finish, round the earth,
By morrow evening; and from land to land
In order, though to nations yet unborn,
Ministering light prepared, they set and rise;
Lest total darkness should by night regain
Her old possession, and extinguish life
In nature and all things; which these soft fires
Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
Of various influence foment and warm,
Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
Their stellar virtue[1] on all kinds that grow
On earth, made hereby apter to receive
Perfection from the sun's more potent ray.
These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
Shine not in vain; nor think, though men were none,
That heaven would want spectators, God want praise:
Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night. How often from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
Celestial voices[J] to the midnight air,

[1] *Their stellar virtue.*

As Milton was an universal scholar, so he had not a little affectation of showing his learning of all kinds, and makes Adam discourse here somewhat like an adept in astrology, which was too much the philosophy of his own times. What he says afterwards of numberless spiritual creatures walking the earth unseen, and joining in praises to their great Creator, is of a nobler strain; more agreeable to reason and revelation, as well as more pleasing to the imagination; and seems to be an imitation and improvement of Hesiod's notion of good genii, the guardians of mortal men, clothed with air, wandering everywhere through the earth.—NEWTON.

[J] *Celestial voices.*

This notion of their singing thus by night is agreeable to the account given by Lucretius, iv. 583.

Quorum noctivago strepitu, ludoque jocanti,
Adfirmant volgo taciturna silentia rumpi,

Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
Singing their great Creator! oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds,
In full harmonic number join'd, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heaven.
  Thus talking, hand in hand alone they pass'd
On to their blissful bower: it was a place
Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed
All things to man's delightful use: the roof
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf: on either side
Acanthus and each odorous bushy shrub
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamin,
Rear'd high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; underfoot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broider'd the ground, more colour'd than with stone
Of costliest emblem: other creature here,
Bird, beast, insect, or worm, durst enter none;
Such was their awe of man. In shadier bower
More sacred and sequester'd, though but feign'd,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept; nor nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
Espoused Eve deck'd first her nuptial bed;
And heavenly quires the hymenæan sung,
What day the genial angel to our sire
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorn'd,
More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
Endow'd with all their gifts; and, O! too like
In sad event, when to the unwiser son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.
  Thus, at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,
Both turn'd, and under open sky adored
The God that made both sky, air, earth, and heaven,
Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,
And starry pole. Thou also madest the night,
Maker Omnipotent, and thou the day,
Which we, in our appointed work employ'd,
Have finish'd happy in our mutual help

Chordarumque sonos fieri dulcesque querelas,
Tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum. NEWTON.

See the present editor's translation of this beautiful passage of Lucretius, thrown into a sonnet among his Poems, published March, 1785, 8vo.

And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordain'd by thee; and this delicious place,
For us too large, where thy abundance wants
Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
But thou hast promised from us two a race
To fill the earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite; both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep.
  This said unanimous, and other rites
Observing none, but adoration pure,
Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
Handed they went; and, eased the putting off
These troublesome disguises which we wear,
Straight side by side were laid; nor turn'd, I ween,
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refused:
Whatever hypocrites austerely talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence;
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain
But our destroyer, foe to God and man?
Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else!
By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
Among the bestial herds to range; by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place;
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
Whose bed is undefiled[k] and chaste pronounced,
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
Here love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,
Casual fruition; nor in court-amours,

[k] *Whose bed is undefiled.*

In allusion to Heb. xiii. 4. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." And Milton must have had a good opinion of marriage, or he would never have had three wives: and though this panegyric upon wedded love may be condemned as a digression, yet it can hardly be called a digression, when it grows so naturally out of the subject, and is introduced so properly, while the action of the poem is in a manner suspended, and while Adam and Eve are lying down to sleep: and if morality be one great end of poetry, that end cannot be better promoted than by such digressions as this, and that upon hypocrisy at the latter part of the third book.—NEWTON.

Mix'd dance, or wanton mask[l], or midnight ball,
Or serenate, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
These, lull'd by nightingales, embracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Shower'd roses, which the morn repair'd. Sleep on,
Blest pair; and, O! yet happiest; if ye seek
No happier state, and know to know no more!
  Now had night measured with her shadowy cone[m]
Half way up hill this vast sublunar vault;
And from their ivory port[n] the cherubim,
Forth issuing at the accustom'd hour, stood arm'd
To their night-watches in warlike parade;
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake:
  Uzziel[o], half these draw off, and coast the south
With strictest watch; these other wheel the north:
Our circuit meets full west. As flame they part[p],
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.
From these two strong and subtle spirits he call'd
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:
  Ithuriel and Zephon[q] with wing'd speed
Search through this garden, leave unsearch'd no nook;
But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,
Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.
This evening from the sun's decline arrived,
Who tells of some infernal spirit seen

[l] *Mix'd dance, or wanton mask.*

An apparent sarcasm on the dissolute court of Charles II.

[m] *With her shadowy cone.*

A cone is a figure round at bottom; and, lessening all the way, ends in a point. —RICHARDSON.

[n] *Their ivory port.*

We cannot conceive that here is any allusion to the ivory gate of sleep, mentioned by Homer and Virgil, from whence false dreams proceeded; for the poet could never intend to insinuate, that what he was saying about the angelic guards was all a fiction: as the rock was of alabaster, ver. 543, so he makes the gate of ivory, which was very proper for an eastern gate, as the finest ivory comes from the East;

India mittit ebur.—Virg. Georg. i. 57.

and houses and palaces of ivory are mentioned as instances of magnificence in Scripture, as are likewise doors of ivory in Ovid, Met. iv. 185.—NEWTON.

[o] *Uzziel.*

The next commanding angel to Gabriel: his name in Hebrew is *the strength of God*, as all God's mighty angels are.—HUME.

[p] *As flame they part*

This break in the verse is excellently adapted to the subject. They part, as the flame divides into separate wreaths: a short simile, but expressive of their quickness and rapidity, and of the brightness and splendour of their armour at the same time. Homer, in the second book of the Iliad, compares the march of the Trojans to the flame; but this simile is better suited to those beings, of whom the Scripture says, "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."—NEWTON.

[q] *Ithuriel and Zephon.*

Two angels having their names as indicative of their offices. Ithuriel, in Hebrew, *the discovery of God:* Zephon, in Hebrew, *a secret*, or *searcher of secrets.*—HUME.

Hitherward bent (who could have thought?) escaped
The bars of hell, on errand bad no doubt:
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.
  So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the moon; these to the bower direct
In search of him they sought: him there they found
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
Assaying by his devilish art to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions as he list, phantasms, and dreams;
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure; thence raise
At least distemper'd, discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,
Blown up with high conceits ingendering pride.
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touch'd lightly; for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness: up he starts
Discover'd and surprised[r]. As when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
Fit for the tun, some magazine to store
Against a rumour'd war; the smutty grain,
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air;
So started up in his own shape the fiend.
Back stepp'd those two fair angels, half amazed
So sudden to behold the grisly king;
Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him soon:
  Which of those rebel spirits adjudged to hell
Comest thou, escaped thy prison? and, transform'd,
Why sat'st thou like an enemy in wait,
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?
  Know ye not then, said Satan, fill'd with scorn,
Know ye not me? ye knew me once no mate
For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar:
Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,
The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in vain?
  To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn:—
Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminish'd brightness to be known,
As when thou stood'st in heaven upright and pure:
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee, and thou resemblest now

[r] *Up he starts*
Discover'd and surprised.
This is a magnificent image, magnificently expressed.

Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul.
But come; for thou, be sure, shalt give account
To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
This place inviolable, and these from harm.
So spake the cherub; and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible: abash'd the devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely[s]; saw, and pined
His loss: but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impair'd; yet seem'd
Undaunted. If I must contend, said he,
Best with the best, the sender not the sent,
Or all at once; more glory will be won,
Or less be lost. Thy fear, said Zephon bold,
Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee, wicked and thence weak.
The fiend replied not, overcome with rage;
But, like a proud steed rein'd, went haughty on,
Champing his iron curb: to strive or fly
He held it vain; awe from above had quell'd
His heart, not else dismay'd. Now drew they nigh
The western point, where those half-rounding guards
Just met, and closing stood in squadron join'd,
Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,
Gabriel, from the front thus call'd aloud:—
O friends! I hear the tread of nimble feet
Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;
And with them comes a third of regal port,
But faded splendour wan; who by his gait
And fierce demeanour seems the prince of hell,
Nor likely to part hence without contest:
Stand firm; for in his look defiance lours.
He scarce had ended, when those two approach'd,
And brief related whom they brought, where found,
How busied, in what form and posture couch'd.
To whom with stern regard thus Gabriel spake:
Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed[t]
To thy transgressions? and disturb'd the charge
Of others, who approve not to transgress
By thy example? but have power and right

[s] *Virtue in her shape how lovely.*

What is said here of seeing "virtue in her shape how lovely," is manifestly borrowed from Plato and Cicero:—"Formam quidem ipsam et quasi faciem honesti vides, quæ si oculis cernerctur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientiæ." Cic. de Off.—NEWTON.

[t] *The bounds prescribed.*

Milton means, as I suppose, that the bounds of hell were by God prescribed to Satan's transgressions, so that it was intended he should transgress nowhere else, but within those bounds; whereas he was now attempting to transgress without them.—NEWTON.

To question thy bold entrance on this place;
Employ'd, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss.
To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow:
Gabriel, thou hadst in heaven the esteem of wise,
And such I held thee; but this question ask'd
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?
Who would not, finding way, break loose from hell,
Though thither doom'd? thou wouldst thyself no doubt,
And boldly venture to whatever place
Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight; which in this place I sought.
To thee no reason, who know'st only good,
But evil hast not tried: and wilt object
His will who bounds us? Let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance: thus much what was ask'd.
The rest is true, they found me where they say;
But that implies not violence or harm.
Thus he in scorn. The warlike angel moved,
Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied:—
O loss of one in heaven to judge of wise!
Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew;
And now returns him from his prison 'scaped,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither
Unlicensed from his bounds in hell prescribed:
So wise he judges it to fly from pain
However, and to 'scape his punishment.
So judge thou still, presumptuous; till the wrath,
Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to hell,
Which taught thee yet no better, that no pain
Can equal anger infinite provoked.
But wherefore thou alone? wherefore with thee
Came not all hell broke loose? is pain to them
Less pain, less to be fled; or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief!
The first in flight from pain! hadst thou alleged
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive.
To which the fiend thus answer'd, frowning stern:—
Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting angel! well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest; when in battel to thy aid
The blasting vollied thunder made all speed,
And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.
But still thy words at random, as before,

Argue thy inexperience what behoves
From hard assays and ill successes past
A faithful leader: not to hazard all
Through ways of danger by himself untried:
I therefore, I alone first undertook
To wing the desolate abyss, and spy
This new created world, whereof in hell
Fame is not silent; here in hope to find
Better abode, and my afflicted powers
To settle here on earth, or in mid air;
Though for possession put to try once more
What thou and thy gay legions dare against;
Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
High up in heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,
And practised distances to cringe, not fight.
 To whom the warrior angel soon replied:—
To say and straight unsay, pretending first
Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
Argues no leader, but a liar traced,
Satan, and couldst thou faithful add? O name,
O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!
Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?
Army of fiends, fit body to fit head.
Was this your discipline and faith engaged,
Your military obedience, to dissolve
Allegiance to the acknowledged Power supreme?
And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
Patron of liberty! who more than thou
Once fawn'd, and cringed, and servilely adored
Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore but in hope
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?
But mark what I arreed thee now; Avaunt;
Fly thither whence thou fledst: if from this hour
Within these hallow'd limits thou appear,
Back to the infernal pit I drag thee chain'd,
And seal thee so, as henceforth not to scorn
The facile gates of hell too slightly barr'd.
 So threaten'd he: but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but waxing more in rage replied:—
 Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains,
Proud limitary cherub; but ere then
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
From my prevailing arm; though heaven's King
Ride on thy wings[u], and thou with thy compeers,

[u] *Ride on thy wings.*

This seems to allude to Ezekiel's vision, where four cherubims are appointed to the four wheels: "And the cherubims did lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the Lord God of Israel was over them above." See Chap. i. and x. and xi. 22.—NEWTON.

Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels
In progress through the road of heaven star-paved.
While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright
Turn'd fiery red, sharpening in mooned horns
Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported spears, as thick as when a field
Of Ceres, ripe for harvest, waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind
Sways them; the careful plowman doubting stands,
Lest on the threshing floor his hopeful sheaves
Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarm'd,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood[v],
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:
His stature reach'd the sky, and on his crest
Sat horrour plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
What seem'd both spear and shield. Now dreadful deeds
Might have ensued; nor only Paradise
In this commotion, but the starry cope
Of heaven perhaps, or all the elements
At least had gone to wrack, disturb'd and torn
With violence of this conflict; had not soon
The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
Hung forth in heaven his golden scales, yet seen[w]
Betwixt Astrea and the Scorpion sign,
Wherein all things created first he weigh'd,
The pendulous round earth with balanced air
In counterpoise; now ponders all events,
Battels, and realms: in these he put two weights,
The sequel each of parting and of fight[x]:

[v] *Dilated stood.*

One of the interesting features of the great adversary of God and man, as drawn by the poet, is resolution in danger: it therefore well admits the poetical decorations that follow.—DUNSTER.

[w] *His golden scales, yet seen.*

The breaking off the combat between Gabriel and Satan, by the hanging out of the golden scales in heaven, is a refinement upon Homer's thought, who tells us, that before the battle between Hector and Achilles, Jupiter weighed the event of it in a pair of scales. The reader may see the whole passage in the 22nd Iliad.

Virgil, before the last decisive combat, describes Jupiter in the same manner, as weighing the fates of Turnus and Æneas. Milton, though he fetched this beautiful circumstance from the Iliad and Æneid, does not only insert it as a poetical embellishment, like the authors above mentioned, but makes an artful use of it for the proper carrying on of his fable, and for the breaking off the combat between the two warriors; who were upon the point of engaging. To this we may farther add, that Milton is the more justified in this passage, as we find the same noble allegory in Holy Writ, where a wicked prince, some few hours before he was assaulted and slain, is said to have been "weighed in the scales and to have been found wanting."—ADDISON.

The allusion, as Dr. Newton observes, to the heavenly sign, *Libra*, or *the Scales*, is a beauty that is not in Homer or Virgil, and gives a manifest advantage over both their descriptions.—TODD.

[x] *The sequel each of parting and of fight.*

In Homer and Virgil the combatants are weighed one against another; but here only Satan is weighed; in one scale, the consequence of his retreating; in the other, of his

The latter quick upflew and kick'd the beam;
Which Gabriel spying, thus bespake the fiend:
  Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine;
Neither our own, but given: what folly then
To boast what arms can do! since thine no more
Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now
To trample thee as mire: for proof look up,
And read thy lot in yon celestial sign;
Where thou art weigh'd[y], and shown how light, how weak,
If thou resist. The fiend look'd up, and knew
His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled
Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

fighting. And there is this farther improvement; that, as in Homer and Virgil the fates are weighed to satisfy Jupiter himself, it is here done to satisfy only the contending parties;—for Satan to read his own destiny! So that when Milton imitates a fine passage, he does not imitate it servilely, but makes it, as I may say, an original of his own, by his manner of varying and improving it.—NEWTON.

[y] *Where thou art weigh'd.*

See Dan. v. 27. "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." So true it is, that Milton oftener imitates Scripture than Homer and Virgil, even where he is thought to imitate them most.—NEWTON.

I shall add to the particular notes an extract from Addison's observations on this book of the poem:—

We may consider the beauties of the fourth book under three heads. In the first are those pictures of still-life, which we meet with in the description of Eden, Paradise, Adam's bower, &c.: in the next are the machines, which comprehend the speeches and behaviour of the good and bad angels: in the last is the conduct of Adam and Eve, who are the principal actors in the poem.

In the description of Paradise, the poet has observed Aristotle's rule of lavishing all the ornaments of diction on the weak inactive parts of the fable which are not supported by the beauty of sentiments and characters. Accordingly, the reader may observe, that the expressions are more florid and elaborate in these descriptions, than in most other parts of the poem. I must farther add, that though the drawings of gardens, rivers, rainbows, and the like dead pieces of nature, are justly censured in an heroic poem, when they run out into an unnecessary length, the description of Paradise would have been faulty, had not the poet been very particular in it; not only as it is the scene of the principal action, but as it is requisite to give us an idea of that happiness from which our first parents fell. The plan of it is wonderfully beautiful, and formed upon the short sketch which we have of it in Holy Writ. Milton's exuberance of imagination has poured forth such a redundancy of ornaments on this seat of happiness and innocence, that it would be endless to point out each particular.

I must not quit this head without farther observing, that there is scarce a speech of Adam or Eve in the whole poem, wherein the sentiments and allusions are not taken from this their delightful habitation. The reader, during their whole course of action, always finds himself in the walks of Paradise. In short, as the critics have remarked, that, in those poems wherein shepherds are the actors, the thoughts ought always to take a tincture from the woods, fields, and rivers; so may we observe, that our first parents seldom lose sight of their happy station in anything they speak or do; and, if the reader will give me leave to use the expression, that their thoughts are always paradisiacal.

We are in the next place to consider the machines of the fourth book. Satan, being now within prospect of Eden, and looking round upon the glories of the creation, is filled with sentiments different from those which he discovered whilst he was in hell. The place inspires him with thoughts more adapted to it.

The thought of Satan's transformation into a cormorant, ver. 196, and placing himself on the Tree of Life, seems raised upon that passage in the Iliad, where two deities are described as perching on the top of an oak, in the shape of vultures. (See the seventh book, near the beginning.)

The description of Adam and Eve, as they first appeared to Satan, is exquisitely drawn, and sufficient to make the fallen angel gaze upon them with all that astonishment, and those emotions of envy, in which he is represented.

There is a fine spirit of poetry in the lines which follow, wherein they are described as sitting on a bed of flowers by the side of a fountain, amidst a mixed assembly of animals. The speeches of these first two lovers flow equally from passion and sincerity: the professions they make to one another are full of warmth; but at the same time founded on truth: in a word, they are the gallantries of Paradise. The part of Eve's speech, in which she gives an account of herself upon her first creation, and the manner in which she was brought to Adam, is, I think, as beautiful a passage as any in Milton, or perhaps in any other poet whatsoever. These passages are all worked off with so much art, that they are capable of pleasing the most delicate reader, without offending the most severe:

That day I oft remember, when from sleep, &c.

A poet of less judgment and invention than this great author would have found it very difficult to have filled these tender parts of the poem with sentiments proper for a state of innocence; to have described the warmth of love, and the professions of it, without artifice or hyperbole; to have made the man speak the most endearing things without descending from his natural dignity, and the woman receiving them without departing from the modesty of her character: in a word, to adjust the prerogatives of wisdom and beauty, and make each appear to the other in its proper force and loveliness. This mutual subordination of the two sexes is wonderfully kept up in the whole poem, as particularly in the speech of Eve I have before mentioned, and upon the conclusion of it; when the poet adds, that the devil turned away with envy at the sight of so much happiness, v. 492, &c.

We have another view of our first parents in their evening discourses, which is full of pleasing images and sentiments suitable to their condition and characters. The speech of Eve, in particular, is dressed up in such a soft and natural turn of words and sentiments, as cannot be sufficiently admired.

Satan's planting himself at the ear of Eve under the form of a toad, in order to produce vain dreams and imaginations, is a striking circumstance; as his starting up in his own form is wonderfully fine, both in the literal description, and in the moral which is concealed under it. His answer upon his being discovered, and demanded to give an account of himself, is conformable to the pride and intrepidity of his character.

Zephon's rebuke, with the influence it had on Satan, is exquisitely graceful and moral. Satan is afterwards led away to Gabriel, the chief of the guardian angels, who kept watch in Paradise. His disdainful behaviour on this occasion is so remarkable a beauty, that the most ordinary reader cannot but take notice of it: Gabriel's discovering his approach at a distance is drawn with great strength and liveliness of imagination.

The conference between Gabriel and Satan abounds with sentiments proper for the occasion, and suitable to the persons of the two speakers. Satan clothing himself with terror when he prepares for the combat is truly sublime, and at least equal to Homer's description of Discord, celebrated by Longinus; or to that of Fame, in Virgil; who are both represented with their feet standing upon the earth, and their heads reaching above the clouds.

I must here take notice, that Milton is everywhere full of hints, and sometimes literal translations, taken from the greatest of the Greek and Latin poets.—ADDISON.

BOOK V.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THIS book consists of elements of the same character and of similar combinations as the fourth. Eve's dream, and the manner of relating it, are in a very high degree poetical: here the invention is perfect, both in imagery, sentiment, and language.

The approach of the angel Raphael, as viewed at a distance by Adam, is designed with all those brilliant circumstances, and those indefinable touches, which give the force of embodied reality to a vision. Milton never relates with the artifices, and attempts to excite attention, of a technical poet: what he creates stands before him as life: he does not struggle to embellish or exaggerate, but simply relates what he believes that he beholds or hears; but none could have beheld or heard these high things, except one inspired.

The hints of a great part of the incidents are taken from the Scriptures; but the invention is not on that account the less. To bring the dim general idea into broad light in all its lineaments is the difficulty, and requires the power.

The conversation between Raphael and Adam is admirably contrived on both sides. These argumentative portions of the poem are almost always grand; and poetical, because they are grand. Now and then, indeed, the bard indulges in the display of too much abstruse learning, or metaphysical subtleties.

As to this portion of the work, which occupies a large space, it is less easy to reconcile it to the general taste; but we must take it as part of the two essential divisions of an epic poem—character and sentiments. Taken by itself, separated from the story, much of it would not be poetical: as part of the story, it is primary essence. Without it, mere imagery would lose almost all its dignity, as well as its instructiveness, because it would lose its intellectual and spiritual charm.

In relating the cause of Satan's rebellion, Raphael sustains all the almost unutterable sublimity of his subject. The hero is drawn wicked and daring beyond prior conception; but mighty and awful as he is wicked. Language to express these high thoughts would have sunk before any other genius but Milton's: and as he had to convey the movements of heavenly spirits by earthly comparisons, the difficulty increased at every step.

To cite detached passages from other poets, as containing a supposed similitude to Milton, is very fallacious. These are patches:—Milton's is a uniform, close-wove, massy web of gold. Numerous particles of the ingredients may be traced in other authors: it is the combination, and the design by which that combination is conducted, that makes the merit.

ARGUMENT.

MORNING approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her: they come forth to their day-labours: their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise: his appearance described; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise got together by Eve; their discourse at table: Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the north, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so custom'd; for his sleep
Was aery-light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan[a],
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough: so much the more
His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve
With tresses discomposed and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet rest: he, on his side
Leaning half-raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice
Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus: Awake,
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
Heaven's last, best gift, my ever new delight!
Awake; the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
How nature paints her colours, how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.
  Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye
On Adam; whom embracing, thus she spake:
  O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
My glory, my perfection; glad I see
Thy face, and morn return'd; for I this night[b]
(Such night till this I never pass'd) have dream'd,
If dream'd, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
Works of day past, or morrow's next design;
But of offence and trouble, which my mind
Knew never till this irksome night. Methought
Close at mine ear one call'd me forth to walk
With gentle voice; I thought it thine: it said,
Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake

[a] *The only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan.*

Aurora's *fan* is not in true taste, as fan is an artificial object, which degrades, not elevates; but *fuming* rills is full of poetry.

[b] *For I this night.*

The breaks in Eve's narration are extremely beautiful, and adapted to the circumstance of one just awakened before the thoughts were well recollected.—STILLINGFLEET.



The fall of the Rebel Angels

Tunes sweetest his love-labour'd song; now reigns
Full-orb'd the moon *, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain,
If none regard: heaven wakes with all his eyes,
Whom to behold but thee, nature's desire?
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.
I rose as at thy call, but found thee not;
To find thee I directed then my walk;
And on, methought, alone I pass'd through ways
That brought me on a sudden to the tree
Of interdicted knowledge: fair it seem'd,
Much fairer to my fancy than by day:
And, as I wondering look'd, beside it stood
One shaped and wing'd like one of those from heaven
By us oft seen; his dewy locks distill'd
Ambrosia; on that tree he also gazed:
And, O fair plant, said he, with fruit surcharged,
Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
Nor God, nor man? is knowledge so despised?
Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?
Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
Longer thy offer'd good: why else set here?
This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm
He pluck'd, he tasted; me damp horrour chill'd
At such bold words vouch'd with a deed so bold:
But he thus, overjoy'd: O fruit divine,
Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt;
Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
For gods, yet able to make gods of men;
And why not gods of men, since good, the more
Communicated, more abundant grows,
The author not impair'd, but honour'd more?
Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve,
Partake thou also; happy though thou art,
Happier thou mayst be, worthier canst not be:
Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods
Thyself a goddess; not to earth confined,
But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes
Ascend to heaven, by merit thine, and see
What life the gods live there, and such live thou.
So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
Ev'n to my mouth of that same fruit held part
Which he had pluck'd: the pleasant savoury smell
So quicken'd appetite, that I, methought,
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
With him I flew; and underneath beheld

* *Full orb'd the moon.*

The poetical enchantment of the images here arises from the simplicity of the expression.

The earth outstretch'd immense, a prospect wide
And various; wondering at my flight and change
To this high exaltation, suddenly
My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
And fell asleep: but, O, how glad I waked
To find this but a dream! Thus Eve her night
Related, and thus Adam answer'd sad:
Best image of myself, and dearer half,
The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
Affects me equally; nor can I like
This uncouth dream, of evil sprung I fear:
Yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,
Created pure. But know, that in the soul
Are many lesser faculties that serve
Reason as chief; among these Fancy next
Her office holds; of all external things,
Which the five watchful senses represent,
She forms imaginations, aery shapes,
Which Reason, joining, or disjoining, frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
Into her private cell, when nature rests.
Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes[d]
To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams;
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
Some such resemblances, methinks, I find
Of our last evening's talk in this thy dream[e],

[d] *Mimic fancy wakes.*

This account of dreams, Mr. Dunster remarks, is as just and as philosophical as it is beautiful and poetical. Sir John Davies gives a similar, but certainly less interesting account of the Phantasie, in his "Nosce Teipsum," 1608, p. 47. The curious reader may also compare Burton's elaborate account of the Phantasie, in his "Anatomie of Melancholy," to which, as Mr. Dunster also thinks, it is probable that Milton here adverted.—TODD.

[e] *In this thy dream.*

We were told in the foregoing book, how the evil spirit practised upon Eve as she lay asleep, in order to inspire her with thoughts of vanity, pride, and ambition. The author, who shows a wonderful art throughout his whole poem, in preparing the reader for the several occurrences that arise in it, founds upon the above-mentioned circumstance the first part of the fifth book. Adam, upon his first awaking, finds Eve still asleep, with an unusual discomposure in her looks. The posture, in which he regards her, is described with a tenderness not to be expressed; as the whisper, with which he awakens her, is the softest that ever was conveyed to a lover's ear.

I cannot but take notice, that Milton, in the conferences between Adam and Eve, had his eye very frequently upon the book of "Canticles," in which there is a noble spirit of eastern poetry, and very often not unlike what we meet with in Homer, who is generally placed near the age of Solomon. I think there is no question but the poet, in the preceding speech, remembered these two passages, which are spoken on the like occasion, and filled with the same pleasing images of nature. "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth

But with addition strange; yet be not sad:
Evil into the mind of God or man
May come and go, so unapproved; and leave
No spot or blame behind: which gives me hope
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
Waking thou never wilt consent to do.
Be not dishearten'd then; nor cloud those looks,
That wont to be more cheerful and serene
Than when fair morning first smiles on the world:
And let us to our fresh employments rise
Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers,
That open now their choicest bosom'd smells,
Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store.
  So cheer'd he his fair spouse, and she was cheer'd;
But silently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair:
Two other precious drops, that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell
Kiss'd, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse,
And pious awe that fear'd to have offended.
  So all was clear'd, and to the field they haste.
But first, from under shady arborous roof
Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring and the sun, who, scarce uprisen,
With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim,
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide landskip all the east
Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains,

her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth." His preferring the garden of Eden to that

> Where the sapient king
> Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse,

shows that the poet had this delightful scene in his mind.

Eve's dream is full of those high conceits ingendering pride, which, we are told, the devil endeavoured to instil into her; of this kind is that part of it where she fancies herself awakened by Adam in the following beautiful lines, ver. 38, &c.:—

> Why sleep'st thou, Eve? Now is the pleasant time, &c.
> ——— Heaven wakes with all his eyes,
> Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire?
> In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
> Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.

An injudicious poet would have made Adam talk through the whole work in such sentiments as these; but flattery and falsehood are not the courtship of Milton's Adam, and could not be heard by Eve in her state of innocence; excepting only in a dream produced on purpose to taint her imagination. Other vain sentiments of the same kind, in this relation of her dream, will be obvious to every reader. Though the catastrophe of the poem is finely presaged on this occasion, the particulars of it are so artfully shadowed, that they do not anticipate the story which follows in the ninth book. I shall only add, that though the vision of itself is founded upon truth, the circumstances of it are full of that wildness and inconsistency which are natural to a dream. Adam, conformable to his superior character for wisdom, instructs and comforts Eve upon this occasion.—ADDISON.

Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid[f]
In various style; for neither various style
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
Flow'd from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,
More tuneable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness; and they thus began:
These are thy glorious works[g], Parent of good,
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels; for ye behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing: ye in heaven;
On earth join all ye creatures to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet; praise him in thy sphere
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,

[f] *Each morning duly paid.*

As it is very well known that our author was no friend to set forms of prayer, it is no wonder that he ascribes extemporary effusions to our first parents; but even while he attributes strains unmeditated to them, he himself imitates the Psalmist.—NEWTON.

He has expressed the same notions of devotion, as Mr. Thyer has observed, in similar terms, b. iv. 736, &c. And it has been said of the poet, that he did not in the latter part of his life use any religious rite in his family; but, as Dr. Gillies remarks, unless the proof be very clear, he who observes how careful Milton is to mention the worship of Adam and Eve, b. iv. 720, v. 137, ix. 197, and xi. 136, will not be easily induced to believe that he entirely neglected the worship of God in his family.—TODD.

[g] *These are thy glorious works.*

The Morning Hymn is written in imitation of one of those psalms, where, in the overflowings of gratitude and praise, the psalmist calls not only upon the angels, but upon the most conspicuous parts of the inanimate creation, to join with him in extolling their common Maker. Invocations of this nature fill the mind with glorious ideas of God's works, and awaken that divine enthusiasm which is so natural to devotion; but if this calling upon the dead parts of nature is at all times a proper kind of worship, it was in a particular manner suitable to our first parents, who had the creation fresh upon their minds, and had not seen the various dispensations of Providence, nor consequently could be acquainted with those many topics of praise which might afford matter to the devotions of their posterity. I need not remark the beautiful spirit of poetry which runs through the whole hymn, or the holiness of that resolution with which it concludes.—ADDISON.

And when high noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st.
Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st,
With the fix'd stars, fix'd in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wandering fires, that move
In mystic dance not without song, resound
His praise, who out of darkness call'd up light.
Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth
Of nature's womb, that in quaternion run[h]
Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix
And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Authour rise;
Whether to deck with clouds the uncolour'd sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
Rising or falling still advance his praise.
His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living souls: ye birds,
That singing up to heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep;
Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail, universal Lord! be bounteous still
To give us only good; and if the night
Have gather'd aught of evil or conceal'd,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.
  So pray'd they innocent, and to their thoughts
Firm peace recover'd soon, and wonted calm.
On to their morning's rural work they haste,
Among sweet dews and flowers, where any row
Of fruit-trees over-woody reach'd too far
Their pamper'd boughs, and needed hands to check
Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine

[h] *That in quaternion run.*

That in a four-fold mixture and combination run a perpetual circle, one element occasionally changing into another, according to the doctrine of Heraclitus, borrowed from Orpheus: "Et cum quatuor sint genera corporum, vicissitudine eorum mundi continuata natura est: nam ex terra, aqua; ex aqua, oritur aër; ex aëre, æther; deinde retrorsum vicissim ex æthere, aër; inde aqua; ex aqua, terra infima. Sic naturis his, ex quibus omnia constant, sursus, deorsus, ultro, citro commeantibus, mundi partium conjunctio continetur." Cicero de Nat. Deor. ii. 33.—NEWTON.

To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves. Them thus employ'd beheld
With pity heaven's high King, and to him call'd
Raphael, the sociable spirit, that deign'd
To travel with Tobias, and secured
His marriage with the seventimes-wedded maid.
Raphael, said he, thou hear'st what stir on earth
Satan, from hell 'scaped through the darksome gulf,
Hath raised in Paradise; and how disturb'd
This night the human pair; how he designs
In them at once to ruin all mankind:
Go therefore, half this day as friend with friend
Converse with Adam; in what bower or shade
Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired,
To respite his day-labour with repast,
Or with repose; and such discourse bring on,
As may advise him of his happy state;
Happiness in his power left free to will,
Left to his own free will, his will though free,
Yet mutable; whence warn him to beware
He swerve not, too secure: tell him withal
His danger, and from whom; what enemy,
Late fallen himself from heaven, is plotting now
The fall of others from like state of bliss;
By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;
But by deceit and lies: this let him know,
Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend
Surprisal, unadmonish'd, unforewarn'd.
So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfill'd
All justice: nor delay'd the winged saint[1]
After his charge received; but from among

[1] *Nor delay'd the winged saint.*

Raphael's departure from before the throne, and his flight through the choirs of angels, are finely imagined. As Milton everywhere fills his poem with circumstances that are marvellous and astonishing, he describes the gate of heaven as framed after such a manner, that it opened of itself upon the approach of the angel who was to pass through it.

Raphael's descent to the earth, with the figure of his person, is represented in very lively colours. Several of the French, Italian, and English poets have given a loose to their imaginations in the description of angels; but I do not remember to have met with any so finely drawn, and so conformable to the notions which are given of them in Scripture, as this in Milton. After having set him forth in all his heavenly plumage, and represented him as alighting upon the earth, the poet concludes his description with a circumstance which is altogether new, and imagined with the greatest strength of fancy:—

—— Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance fill'd
The circuit wide.

Raphael's reception by the guardian-angels; his passing through the wilderness of sweets; his distant appearance to Adam; have all the graces that poetry is capable of bestowing. The author afterwards gives a particular description of Eve in her domestic employments.—ADDISON.

Thousand celestial ardours, where he stood
Veil'd with his gorgeous wings, up springing light,
Flew through the midst of heaven: the angelic quires,
On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
Through all the empyreal road; till, at the gate
Of heaven arrived, the gate self-open'd wide
On golden hinges turning, as by work
Divine the sovran Architect had framed.
From hence no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight,
Star interposed, however small, he sees,
Not unconform to other shining globes,
Earth, and the garden of God, with cedars crown'd
Above all hills: as when by night the glass
Of Galileo, less assured, observes
Imagined lands and regions in the moon:
Or pilot, from amidst the Cyclades
Delos or Samos first appearing, kens
A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky
Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing:
Now on the polar winds, then with quick fan
Winnows the buxom air; till within soar
Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems
A phœnix, gazed by all as that sole bird,
When, to enshrine his reliques in the Sun's
Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise
He lights, and to his proper shape returns
A seraph wing'd: six wings he wore, to shade
His lineaments divine: the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad came mantling o'er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colours dipp'd in heaven; the third his feet
Shadow'd from either heel with feather'd mail,
Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance fill'd
The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands
Of angels under watch; and to his state,
And to his message high, in honour rise:
For on some message high they guess'd him bound.
Their glittering tents he pass'd, and now is come
Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm;
A wilderness of sweets: for nature here
Wanton'd as in her prime, and play'd at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.

Him through the spicy forest onward come
Adam discern'd, as in the door he sat
Of his cool bower, while now the mounted sun
Shot down direct his fervid rays, to warm
Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs:
And Eve within, due at her hour prepared
For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
Berry, or grape: to whom thus Adam call'd:
 Haste hither, Eve, and worth thy sight behold,
Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape
Comes this way moving; seems another morn
Risen on mid-noon; some great behest from Heaven
To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
And, what thy stores contain, bring forth, and pour
Abundance, fit to honour and receive
Our heavenly stranger: well we may afford
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
From large bestow'd, where nature multiplies
Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
More fruitful; which instructs us not to spare.
 To whom thus Eve: Adam, earth's hallow'd mould,
Of God inspired; small store will serve, where store,
All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;
Save what by frugal storing firmness gains
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes:
But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
To entertain our angel-guest, as he
Beholding shall confess, that here on earth
God hath dispensed his bounties as in heaven.
 So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent:
What choice to choose for delicacy best;
What order, so contrived as not to mix
Tastes, not well join'd, inelegant; but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change:
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk,
Whatever earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India East or West, or middle shore
In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where
Alcinus reign'd; fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell,
She gathers, tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand. For drink the grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meaths
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels press'd

She tempers dulcet creams; nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure; then strows the ground
With rose and odours from the shrub unfumed.
  Meanwhile our primitive great sire, to meet
His godlike guest, walks forth; without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfections: in himself was all his state;
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horses led, and grooms besmear'd with gold,
Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.
Nearer his presence Adam, though not awed,
Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,
As to a superior nature bowing low,
Thus said: Native of heaven, for other place
None can than heaven such glorious shape contain;
Since, by descending from the thrones above,
Those happy places thou hast deign'd awhile
To want, and honour these; vouchsafe with us
Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess
This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower
To rest; and what the garden choicest bears
To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
Be over, and the sun more cool decline.
  Whom thus the angelic Virtue answer'd mild:
Adam, I therefore came: nor art thou such
Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
As may not oft invite, though spirits of heaven,
To visit thee: lead on, then, where thy bower
O'ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
I have at will. So to the sylvan lodge
They came, that like Pomona's arbour smiled,
With flowerets deck'd, and fragrant smells; but Eve,
Undeck'd save with herself, more lovely fair
Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feign'd
Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
Stood to entertain her guest from heaven; no veil
She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm
Alter'd her cheek. On whom the angel Hail
Bestow'd[j]; the holy salutation used

[j] *On whom the angel Hail*
Bestow'd.

Though in this and other parts of the same book, the subject is only the housewifery of our first parent, it is set off with so many pleasing images and strong expressions, as make it none of the least agreeable parts in this divine work.

The natural majesty of Adam, and, at the same time, his submissive behaviour to the Superior Being who had vouchsafed to be his guest; the solemn *Hail* which the angel bestows upon the mother of mankind, with the figure of Eve ministering at the table; are circumstances which deserve to be admired.—ADDISON.

If I may venture to speak my frank opinion, I confess I do not admire this descrip-

Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:
Hail, mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb
Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons,
Than with these various fruits the trees of God
Have heap'd this table! Raised of grassy turf
Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
And on her ample square from side to side
All autumn piled; though spring and autumn here
Danced hand in hand. Awhile discourse they hold;
No fear lest dinner cool; when thus began
Our author: Heavenly stranger, please to taste
These bounties, which our nourisher, from whom
All perfect good, unmeasur'd out, descends,
To us for food and for delight hath caused
The earth to yield; unsavoury food, perhaps,
To spiritual natures: only this I know,
That one celestial Father gives to all.
  To whom the angel: Therefore what he gives
(Whose praise be ever sung) to man in part
Spiritual, may of purest spirits be found
No ungrateful food: and food alike those pure
Intelligential substances require,
As doth your rational; and both contain
Within them every lower faculty
Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
Tasting concoct, digest assimilate,
And corporeal to incorporeal turn.
For know, whatever was created needs
To be sustain'd and fed: of elements
The grosser feeds the purer; earth the sea;
Earth and the sea feed air; the air those fires
Ethereal; and as lowest first the moon;
Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
Vapours not yet into her substance turn'd.
Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale
From her moist continent to higher orbs.
The sun that light imparts to all, receives
From all his alimental recompense
In humid exhalations, and at even
Sups with the ocean. Though in heaven the trees
Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
Yield nectar; though from off the boughs each morn
We brush mellifluous dews, and find the ground
Cover'd with pearly grain; yet God hath here
Varied his bounty so with new delights,

tion of Eve's housewifery and table-entertainment of the angel: it was not necessary, and had been better omitted. The picture is too earthly, too familiar—I had almost said, too coarse. It breaks in upon the imaginative spell;—that dimness and mysteriousness in which spiritual poetry delights.

As may compare with heaven; and to taste
Think not I shall be nice. So down they sat,
And to their viands fell; nor seemingly
The angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
Of theologians; but with keen dispatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate: what redounds, transpires
Through spirits with ease; nor wonder; if by fire
Of sooty coal the empiric alchemist
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,
As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
Minister'd naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crown'd. O innocence
Deserving Paradise! if ever, then,
Then had the sons of God excuse[k] to have been
Enamour'd at that sight; but in those hearts
Love unlibidinous reign'd, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injured lover's hell.
  Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
Not burden'd nature, sudden mind arose
In Adam, not to let the occasion pass,
Given him by this great conference, to know
Of things above his world, and of their being
Who dwell in heaven, whose excellence he saw
Transcend his own so far; whose radiant forms,
Divine effulgence, whose high power, so far
Exceeded human; and his wary speech
Thus to the empyreal minister he framed:
  Inhabitant with God, now know I well
Thy favour, in this honour done to man;
Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed
To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
Food not of angels, yet accepted so,
As that more willingly thou couldst not seem
At heaven's high feasts to have fed; yet what compare?
  To whom the winged Hierarch replied:
O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not depraved from good; created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
But more refined, more spirituous, and pure,
As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending

k —— *if ever, then,*
Then had the sons of God excuse.

Some of the Rabbins say Eve was so beautiful, that the prince of angels fell in love with her, which occasioned his fall.—UPTON.

Each in their several active spheres assign'd,
Till body up to spirit work[l], in bounds
Proportion'd to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk; from thence the leaves
More aery; last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes: flowers and their fruit,
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual; give both life and sense
Fancy and understanding: whence the soul
Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive or intuitive: discourse
Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours,
Differing but in degree, of kind the same.
Wonder not then, what God for you saw good
If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
To proper substance. Time may come, when men
With angels may participate, and find
No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare:
And from these corporeal nutriments perhaps
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
Improved by tract of time, and, wing'd, ascend
Ethereal, as we[m]; or may, at choice,
Here or in heavenly Paradises dwell;
If ye be found obedient, and retain
Unalterably firm his love entire,
Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
Your fill what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend, incapable of more.
  To whom the patriarch of mankind replied:
O favourable spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge and the scale of nature set
From centre to circumference; whereon,
In contemplation of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
What meant that caution join'd, If ye be found
Obedient? Can we want obedience then
To him, or possibly his love desert,

[l] *Till body up to spirit work.*

Newton says that this opinion is neither orthodox, nor philosophy. I leave it to be decided by theologians and metaphysicians.

[m] *—— and, wing'd, ascend*
Ethereal, as we.

It is the doctrine of the ablest divines and primitive Fathers of the Catholic church, that if Adam had not sinned, he would never have died, but would have been translated from earth to heaven; and this doctrine the reader may see illustrated in the learned Bishop Bull's discourse, "Of the State of Man before the Fall." Our author, no doubt, was very well acquainted with the sense of antiquity in this particular; and, admitting the notion, what he says is poetical at least, if you will not allow it to be probable and rational.—NEWTON.

Who form'd us from the dust, and placed us here,
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desires can seek or apprehend?
To whom the Angel: Son of heaven and earth,
Attend: that thou art happy, owe to God;
That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,
That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
This was that caution given thee; be advised.
God made thee perfect, not immutable:
And good he made thee, but to persevere
He left it in thy power; ordained thy will
By nature free, not over-ruled by fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity:
Our voluntary service he requires,
Not our necessitated; such with him
Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By destiny, and can no other choose?
Myself, and all the angelic host, that stand
In sight of God, enthroned, our happy state
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
On other surety none: freely we serve,
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,
And so from heaven to deepest hell; O fall
From what high state of bliss, into what woe!
To whom our great progenitor: Thy words
Attentive, and with more delighted ear,
Divine instructer, I have heard, than when
Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills
Aereal music send: nor knew I not
To be both will and deed created free;
Yet that we never shall forget to love
Our Maker, and obey him whose command
Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts
Assured me, and still assure: though what thou tell'st
Hath pass'd in heaven, some doubt within me move,
But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
The full relation, which must needs be strange,
Worthy of sacred silence to be heard;
And we have yet large day; for scarce the sun
Hath finish'd half his journey, and scarce begins
His other half in the great zone of heaven.
Thus Adam made request; and Raphael[n],

[n] *Raphael.*

Raphael's behaviour is every way suitable to the dignity of his nature, and to that character of a sociable spirit with which the author has so judiciously introduced

After short pause assenting, thus began:
  High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of men,
Sad task and hard; for how shall I relate
To human sense the invisible exploits
Of warring spirits? how, without remorse,
The ruin of so many, glorious once
And perfect while they stood? how last unfold
The secrets of another world, perhaps
Not lawful to reveal? yet for thy good
This is dispensed; and what surmounts the reach
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
By likening spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best; though what if earth[o]
Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?
  As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild
Reign'd where these heavens now roll, where earth now rests
Upon her centre poised; when on a day
(For time, though in eternity, applied
To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future), on such day
As heaven's great year[p] brings forth, the empyreal host[q]
Of angels, by imperial summons call'd,
Innumerable before the Almighty's throne
Forthwith, from all the ends of heaven, appear'd

him. He had received instructions to converse with Adam, as one friend converses with another, and to warn him of the enemy who was contriving his destruction. Accordingly, he is represented as sitting down at table with Adam, and eating of the fruits of Paradise. The occasion naturally leads him to his discourse on the food of angels. After having thus entered into conversation with man upon more indifferent subjects, he warns him of his obedience, and makes a natural transition to the history of that fallen angel who was engaged in the circumvention of our first parents.—ADDISON.

[o] *Though what if earth, &c.*

In order to make Adam comprehend these things, the angel tells him that he "must liken spiritual to corporal forms," and questions whether there is not a greater similitude and resemblance between things in heaven and things in earth than is generally imagined; which is suggested very artfully; as it is, indeed, the best apology that could be made for those bold figures which Milton has employed, and especially in his descriptions of the battles of the angels. To the same purpose, says Mede, Discourse x.: "If the visible things of God may be learned, as St. Paul says, from the creation of the world, why may not the invisible and intelligible world be learned from the fabric of the visible? the one (it may be) being the pattern of the other."—NEWTON.

[p] *As heaven's great year.*

Our poet seems to have had Plato's great year in his thoughts. See also Virgil, Ecl. iv. 5, and 12.—HUME.

Plato's great year of the heavens is the revolution of all the spheres. Every thing returns to where it set out when their motion first began. See Auson. Idyl. xviii. 15. A proper time for the declaration of the vicegerency of the Son of God. Milton has the same thought for the birth of the angels, v. 861, imagining such kind of revolutions long before the angels or the world were in being. So far back into eternity did the vast mind of this poet carry him.—RICHARDSON.

[q] *The empyreal host.*

See Job i. 6, and 1 Kings xxii. 19.—NEWTON: and Dan. vii. 10.—TODD.

Under their hierarchs in orders bright:
Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards and gonfalons 'twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;
Or in their glittering tissues bear imblazed
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs
Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
Orb within orb, the Father infinite,
By whom in bliss imbosom'd sat the Son,
Amidst, as from a flaming mount, whose top
Brightness had made invisible, thus spake:
  Hear, all ye angels, progeny of light,
Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers;
Hear my decree[r], which unrevoked shall stand:
This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand; your head I him appoint;
And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow
All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord.
Under his great vicegerent reign abide
United, as one individual soul,
For ever happy: him who disobeys,
Me disobeys, breaks union; and that day,
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness, deep ingulf'd, his place
Ordain'd without redemption, without end.
  So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words
All seem'd well pleased; all seem'd, but were not all.
That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred hill;
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets, and of fix'd, in all her wheels
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem;
And in their motions harmony divine
So smoothes her charming tones, that God's own ear
Listens delighted. Evening now approach'd
(For we have also our evening and our morn,
We ours for change delectable, not need);

[r] *Hear my decree.*

We observed before, that Milton was very cautious what sentiments and language he ascribed to the Almighty, and generally confined himself to the phrases and expressions of Scripture; and in this particular speech the reader will easily remark how much of it is copied from Holy Writ, by comparing it with the following texts: Psalm ii. 6, 7; Gen. xxii. 16; Philip. ii. 10, 11.—NEWTON. Also to Heb. i. 5.—TODD.

Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
Desirous; all in circles as they stood,
Tables are set, and on a sudden piled
With angels' food; and rubied nectar flows
In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,
Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of heaven.
On flowers reposed, and with fresh flowerets crown'd,
They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
Quaff immortality and joy, secure
Of surfeit, where full measure only bounds
Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who shower'd
With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.
Now when ambrosial night with clouds exhaled
From that high mount of God, whence light and shade
Spring both, the face of brightest heaven had changed
To grateful twilight (for night comes not there
In darker veil), and roseat dews disposed
All but the unsleeping eyes of God[s] to rest;
Wide over all the plain, and wider far
Than all this globous earth in plain outspread
(Such are the courts of God), the angelic throng,
Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend
By living streams[t] among the trees of life,
Pavilions numberless and sudden rear'd,
Celestial tabernacles, where they slept
Fann'd with cool winds; save those, who, in their course,
Melodious hymns about the sovran throne
Alternate all night long: but not so waked
Satan; so call him now; his former name
Is heard no more in heaven: he of the first,
If not the first archangel, great in power,
In favour, and pre-eminence, yet fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honour'd by his great Father, and proclaim'd
Messiah King anointed, could not bear
Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired.
Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipp'd, unobey'd, the throne supreme,
Contemptuous; and his next subordinate
Awakening, thus to him in secret spake:
Sleep'st thou, companion dear? what sleep can close

[s] *Unsleeping eyes of God.*

So the Psalmist, Psalm cxxi. 4:—"He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." The author had likewise Homer in mind, Il. ii. 1.—NEWTON.

[t] *By living streams.*

Rev. vii. 17:—"The Lamb shall lead unto living fountains of water."—TODD.

Thy eyelids? and remember'st what decree
Of yesterday, so late hath pass'd the lips
Of heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts
Was wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart:
Both waking we were one; how then can now
Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed;
New laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise
In us who serve, new counsels to debate
What doubtful may ensue: more in this place
To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;
Tell them, that by command, ere yet dim night
Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
And all who under me their banners wave,
Homeward, with flying march, where we possess
The quarters of the north[u]; there to prepare

[u] *The quarters of the north.*

See Sannazarius, de Partu Virginis, iii. 40. There are other passages in the same poem of which Milton has made use.—JORTIN.

Some have thought that Milton intended, but I dare say he was above intending here, a reflection upon Scotland; though being himself an independent, he had no great affection for the Scotch presbyterians. He had the authority, we see, of Sannazarius for fixing Satan's rebellion in "the quarters of the north;" and he had much better authority, the same that Sannazarius had,—that of the prophet, whose words, though applied to the king of Babylon, yet alluded to this rebellion of Satan, Isaiah xiv. 12:—"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north." St. Austin says, that the devil and his angels, being averse from the light and fervour of charity, grew torpid as it were with an icy hardness; and are therefore, by a figure, placed in the north. See his Epist. cxi. sect. 55. And Shakspeare calls Satan "the monarch of the north," 1 Hen. VI. a. v., s. 3. I have seen too a Latin poem by Odoricus Valmerana, printed at Vienna in 1627, and entitled "Dæmonomachiæ, sive de Bello Intelligentiarum super Divini Verbi Incarnatione." This poem is longer than the Iliad, for it consists of five-and-twenty books, but it equals the Iliad in nothing but in length, for the poetry is very indifferent: however, in some particulars the plan of this poem is very like "Paradise Lost." It opens with the exaltation of the Son of God; and thereupon Lucifer revolts, and draws a third part of the angels after him into the quarters of the north:—

Pars tertia lævam,
Hoc duce persequitur, gelidoque aquilone locatur.

It is more probable that Milton had seen this poem, than some others from which he is charged with borrowing largely. He was indeed a universal scholar, and read all sorts of authors, and took hints from the moderns as well as the ancients. He was a great genius, but a great genius formed by reading; and, as it was said of Virgil, he collected gold out of the dung of other authors.—NEWTON.

The commentators have not observed that there is still another poem, which Milton seems to have copied, "L'Angelida di Erasmo di Valvasone," printed at Venice in 1590, describing the battle of the angels against Lucifer. I beg leave to add that Milton seems also to have attended to a poem of Tasso, not much noticed, on the Creation, "Le Sette Giornate del Mondo Creato," in 1607.—J. WARTON.

This poem of Tasso is in blank verse: the measure, therefore, as well as the subject, would particularly interest Milton. There is another poem, still less noticed, into which also Milton might have looked, "Della Creatione del Mondo, Poema Sacro, del Signor Gasparo Murtola, Giorni sette, Canti sedici," printed at Venice in 1608: the printer of which informs the reader that this work had been expected by the learned with much impatience.—TODD.

Fit entertainment to receive our King,
The great Messiah, and his new commands;
Who speedily through all the hierarchies
Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.
So spake the false archangel, and infused
Bad influence into the unwary breast
Of his associate: he together calls,
Or several one by one, the regent powers,
Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,
That the Most High commanding, now ere night,
Now ere dim night had disencumber'd heaven,
The great hierarchal standard was to move;
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words and jealousies to sound
Or taint integrity: but all obey'd
The wonted signal and superiour voice
Of their great potentate; for great indeed
His name, and high was his degree in heaven:
His countenance, as the morning star[v] that guides
The starry flock, allured them; and with lies
Drew after him the third part of heaven's host[w].
Meanwhile the eternal eye, whose sight discerns
Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
And from within the golden lamps[x] that burn
Nightly before him, saw without their light
Rebellion rising; saw in whom, how spread
Among the sons of morn[y], what multitudes
Were banded to oppose his high decree;
And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:—
Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, heir of all my might[z],
Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
We mean to hold what anciently we claim
Of deity or empire: such a foe
Is rising, who intends to erect his throne

[v] *His countenance, as the morning-star.*

This similitude is not so new as poetical. Virgil, in like manner, compares the beautiful young Pallas to the morning-star, Æn. viii. 589, &c. But there is a much greater propriety in Milton's comparing Satan to the morning-star, as he is often spoken of under the name of Lucifer, as well as denominated Lucifer, *son of the morning*.—NEWTON.

[w] *The third part of heaven's host.*

See Rev. xii. 3, 4.—NEWTON.

[x] *The golden lamps.*

Alluding to the lamps before the throne of God, which St. John saw in his vision, Rev. iv. 5:—"And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne."—NEWTON.

[y] *Sons of morn.*

See Isaiah xiv. 12.—TODD.

[z] *Heir of all my might.*

"For he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and appointed heir of all things."—NEWTON.

Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north;
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
In battel, what our power is, or our right.
Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ
In our defence: lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.
To whom the Son, with calm aspect and clear,
Lightning divine, ineffable, serene,
Made answer:—Mighty Father, thou thy foes
Justly hast in derision, and, secure,
Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain,
Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
Illustrates; when they see all regal power
Given me to quell their pride, and in event
Know whether I be dextrous to subdue
Thy rebels, or be found the worst in heaven.
So spake the Son: but Satan, with his powers,
Far was advanced on winged speed: an host
Innumerable as the stars of night,
Or stars of morning, dew-drops[a], which the sun
Impearls on every leaf and every flower.
Regions they pass'd, the mighty regencies
Of seraphim, and potentates, and thrones,
In their triple degrees; regions, to which
All thy dominion, Adam, is no more
Than what this garden is to all the earth,
And all the sea, from one entire globose
Stretch'd into longitude; which having pass'd,
At length into the limits of the north
They came; and Satan to his royal seat,
High on a hill far blazing, as a mount
Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers
From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold;
The palace of great Lucifer (so call
That structure in the dialect of men
Interpreted), which not long after, he,
Affecting all equality with God,
In imitation of that mount whereon
Messiah was declared in sight of heaven,
The mountain of the Congregation[b] call'd;
For thither he assembled all his train,

[a] *Or stars of morning, dew-drops.*

Innumerable as the stars, is an old simile; but this of the stars of morning, *dew-drops*, seems as new as it is beautiful: and the sun impearls them—turns them by his reflected beams to seeming pearls; as the morn was said before to sow the earth with orient pearl, ver. 2.—NEWTON.

[b] *The mountain of the congregation.*

Isaiah xiv. 13:—"I will sit also upon the *mount of the congregation*, in the sides of the north."—NEWTON.

Pretending so commanded to consult
About the great reception of their King,
Thither to come; and with calumnious art
Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears:
 Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers;
If these magnific titles yet remain
Not merely titular, since by decree
Another now hath to himself engross'd
All power, and us eclipsed under the name
Of King anointed, for whom all this haste
Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
This only to consult how we may best,
With what may be devised of honours new,
Receive him coming to receive from us
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!
Too much to one! but double how endured,
To one, and to his image now proclaim'd?
But what if better counsels might erect
Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke?
Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
Natives and sons of heaven, possess'd before
By none; and if not equal all, yet free[c],
Equally free; for orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
Who can in reason then, or right, assume
Monarchy over such as live by right
His equals? if in power and splendour less,
In freedom equal: or can introduce
Law and edict on us? who without law
Err not: much less for this[d] to be our Lord,
And look for adoration; to the abuse
Of those imperial titles, which assert
Our being ordain'd to govern, not to serve.
 Thus far his bold discourse without controul
Had audience; when among the seraphim,
Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored
The Deity, and divine commands obey'd,
Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
The current of his fury thus opposed:
 O argument blasphemous, false, and proud!
Words which no ear ever to hear in heaven
Expected, least of all from thee, ingrate,

[c] *If not equal all, yet free.*

Let those who talk of absolute equality, remember these words of one whom they must allow to have been a lover of freedom.—J. WARTON.

[d] *For this.*

"For this," must be, "in right of law or edict."

In place thyself so high above thy peers.
Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
That to his only Son, by right endued
With regal sceptre, every soul in heaven
Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due
Confess him rightful King? unjust, thou say'st,
Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
And equal over equals to let reign,
One over all with unsucceeded power.
Shalt thou give law[e] to God? shalt thou dispute
With him the points of liberty, who made
Thee what thou art, and form'd the powers of heaven
Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?
Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
And of our good and of our dignity
How provident he is: how far from thought
To make us less, bent rather to exalt
Our happy state, under one head more near
United. But to grant it thee unjust,
That equal over equals monarch reign:
Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,
Or all angelic nature join'd in one,
Equal to him Begotten Son? by whom,
As by his word, the mighty Father made[f]
All things, even thee; and all the spirits of heaven
By him created in their bright degrees;
Crown'd them with glory, and to their glory named
Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers,
Essential powers; nor by his reign obscured,
But more illustrious made; since he the head
One of our number thus reduced becomes;
His laws our laws; all honour to him done
Returns our own. Cease then this impious rage,
And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
The incensed Father and the incensed Son,
While pardon may be found[g] in time besought.
  So spake the fervent angel; but his zeal
None seconded, as out of season judged,

[e] *Shalt thou give law?*

From Rom. ix. 20:—"Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"—GILLIES.

[f] *By whom,*
As by his word, the mighty Father made.

From Col. i. 16, 17:—"For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." And the conclusion of this speech is taken from the conclusion of Psalm ii.—NEWTON.

[g] *While pardon may be found.*

From Isaiah lv. 6:—"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found."—GILLIES.

Or singular and rash: whereat rejoiced
The Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied:
  That we were form'd then, say'st thou? and the work
Of secondary hand by task transferr'd
From Father to his Son? strange point and new!
Doctrine which we would know whence learn'd: who saw
When this creation was[h]? Remember'st thou
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us; self-begot, self-raised
By our own quickening power, when fatal course
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
Of this our native heaven, ethereal sons.
Our puissance is our own[i]; our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds[j], by proof to try
Who is our equal: then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt the almighty throne
Beseeching or besieging. This report,
These tidings carry to the anointed King;
And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.
  He said; and, as the sound of waters deep[k],
Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause
Through the infinite host; nor less for that
The flaming seraph fearless, though alone,
Encompass'd round with foes, thus answer'd bold:
  O alienate from God, O spirit accursed,
Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall
Determined, and thy hapless crew, involved
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread
Both of thy crime and punishment. Henceforth
No more be troubled how to quit the yoke
Of God's Messiah; those indulgent laws
Will not be now vouchsafed; other decrees

[h] *Who saw*
When this creation was?

Like the sublime question in Job xxxviii. 4:—"Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Milton, perhaps with a second reference to this passage, observes at v. 250, b. viii.—

For man to tell how human life began
Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?—TODD.

[i] *Our puissance is our own.*

See Psalm xii. 4:—"Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?"—GILLIES.

[j] *Our own right hand*
Shall teach us highest deeds.

From Psalm xlv. 4:—"Thine own right hand shall teach thee terrible things." And Virg. Æn. x. 773:—

Dextra mihi deus, et telum quod missile libro.—BENTLEY.

[k] *As the sound of waters deep.*

"The voice of a great multitude" applauding, is in like manner compared to "the voice of many waters," Rev. xix. 6.—NEWTON.

See also Homer, Il. ii. 209, 394.—STILLINGFLEET.

Against thee are gone forth without recall:
That golden sceptre, which thou didst reject,
Is now an iron rod, to bruise and break
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise:
Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly
These wicked tents devoted[l]: lest the wrath
Impendent, raging into sudden flame,
Distinguish not: for soon expect to feel
His thunder on thy head, devouring fire:
Then who created thee lamenting learn;
When, who can uncreate thee, thou shalt know.
  So spake the seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal:
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst them forth he pass'd,
Long way through hostile scorn; which he sustain'd
Superiour, nor of violence fear'd aught;
And, with retorted scorn, his back he turn'd
On those proud towers[m] to swift destruction doom'd.

[l] *These wicked tents devoted.*

In allusion probably to the rebellion of Korah, &c., Numb. xvi. 26, where Moses exhorts the congregation, saying, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, lest ye be consumed in all their sins."—NEWTON.

[m] *Proud towers.*

"Towers" may mean those troops that had scorned and insulted him.—TODD.

BOOK VI.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In the notes on the former books I have made long extracts from the beautiful essays of Addison on the Paradise Lost: I shall forbear to do it on the present occasion, because I find nothing relating to this book importantly different from the matter of the notes cited from other critics.

The battle of the rebellious angels is the grand feature of this book; it is generally regarded as one of the most admirable parts of the poem. I will frankly confess, that I cannot entirely subscribe to this opinion. In the first place, the introduction of the invention of artillery into the combat is objectionable:—in the war of spirits it is degrading, and almost ludicrous. In the whole mode of carrying on this mighty effort against heaven, there is too much of earth and materialism. It will be answered, that this was of necessity; for how was a war of spirits to be expressed? Perhaps such a difficulty was insurmountable; but then the subject should have been covered with a mantle: at least, the elements might have been made to contend;—a universal tempest of fire, wind, and water. Here everything is conducted almost in the ordinary manner, and with the technical skill of human warfare, except that the degree of force is more gigantic.

It will be pleaded, that Milton had the authority of the language of Holy Writ for such descriptions; and that he generally speaks in the very words of the Bible. It is true that he adopts these words with astonishing skill and genius; but he contrives to go into details which break up the spell of their mysteries. The phraseology of these Sacred Writings referred to is astonishingly sublime, picturesque, and poetical; if Milton could have stopped exactly where that stopped, he would have done better. This is a bold censure, but it is sincere. I think that the poet was sometimes led into this by his rivalry of Homer and Virgil, and the other ancient classics. He had a great advantage over them in his subject, and he should not have fallen from it: there is no poetry in Homer or Virgil like the poetry of the Bible.

I fully admit that such was the "height of Milton's argument," that all human or earthly imagery inevitably sunk below it; and that his task imposed upon him the evil "magna componere parvis." On many occasions of his work, his illustrations not only do not offend, but create beautiful poetry: the illustration derives reflected splendour from that which it is placed to illustrate.

Johnson says, that Milton "saw nature through the spectacle of books." As long as he enjoyed his sight, there is no doubt that he saw her by his own unaided eyes; and nothing can be more fresh than many of his descriptions of natural scenery: this is proved by the simplicity and nakedness of his language. He does not dress up the moon and the stars, the lakes and the valleys, into affected personifications.

The richness of his array, both of the magnificent and the fair, of embodied forms, is sometimes surprising; and he allows the intervention of no feeble words to weaken his imagery. The condensed collocation of his language is peculiar to himself. Its breaks—its bursts—the strong—the rough and the flowing—the concise and the gigantic—are mingled with a surprising skill, and eloquence, and magic. It is easy to find single gems in other authors; the galaxy is the wonder. Milton's splendour when it began to rise, did not stop till it blazed.

Even supposing his Book of Battles to be liable to the censure I have hazarded, still the manner in which it augments its force as it goes onward, is miraculous. The character of Satan combining the height of wickedness with grandeur of power and will, is supported in a state of progressive elevation; while the Deity, Father



Mustering of the Warrior Angels

Book VI

and Son, still retains his supremacy; and, to whatever sublimity the rebel angel is lifted, soars in unapproached dominion above him. All this is displayed with marvellous splendour of genius in the close of the Sixth Book. The effects of Satan's defeat are conceived and described with a superhuman strength of imagination.

I have already expressed an opinion very unpopular, that the argumentative parts of this composition are as noble in poetical merit as the descriptive. They spring from that visionary power which makes the poet, as the fresh and fragrant exhalations arise from the fruits and flowers of the productive earth. If they strike less at first, they longer retain their charm. But I would not forego the imagery: it is the union of both which makes the unrivalled and inimitable excellence of this work, so far surpassing all other mere human compositions. Nay, it must not be called merely human: it has all the marks of inspiration; and when such large parts of it are the words of Holy Writ, can this be wondered at?

ARGUMENT.

RAPHAEL continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battel against Satan and his angels. The first fight described; Satan and his powers retire under night: he calls a council; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day's fight, put Michael and his angels to some disorder; but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan: yet the tumult not so ending, God on the third day sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory. He, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, towards the wall of heaven; which opening, they leap down with horrour and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the deep. Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

ALL night the dreadless angel, unpursued,
Through heaven's wide champain held his way; till Morn,
Waked by the circling hours [a], with rosy hand
Unbarr'd the gates of light. There is a cave
Within the mount of God, fast by his throne,
Where light and darkness in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns [b], which makes through heaven
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night:
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour
To veil the heaven, though darkness there might well
Seem twilight here: and now went forth the Morn,
Such as in highest heaven, array'd in gold
Empyreal: from before her vanish'd Night,
Shot through [c] with orient beams; when all the plain,

[a] *The circling hours, with rosy hand.*

How inferior is Gray's imitation!—

Lo, where the rosy-bosom'd hours.

[b] *Lodge and dislodge by turns.*

The thought of light and darkness *lodging and dislodging by turns*, the one issuing forth, and the other entering, is plainly borrowed from a fine passage in Hesiod, Theog. 748.—NEWTON.

[c] *Shot through.*

Thyer objects to this as a quaint conceit below the dignity of Milton: on the contrary, it is correctly and beautifully poetical.

Cover'd with thick embattel'd squadrons bright,
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,
Reflecting blaze on blaze[d], first met his view:
War he perceived, war in procinct; and found
Already known what he for news had thought
To have reported: gladly then he mix'd
Among those friendly powers, who him received
With joy and acclamations loud, that one,
That of so many myriads fallen, yet one
Return'd not lost. On to the sacred hill
They led him high applauded, and present
Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,
From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:
  Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintain'd
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach[e], far worse to bear
Than violence; for this was all thy care,
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
Judged thee perverse: the easier conquest now
Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,
Back on thy foes more glorious to return,
Than scorn'd thou didst depart; and to subdue
By force, who reason for their law refuse,
Right reason for their law, and for their King
Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.
Go, Michael[f], of celestial armies prince;

[d] *Blaze on blaze.*

See 1 Maccabees, vi. 39. "Now when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and brass, the mountains glistered therewith, and shined like lamps of fire."—TODD.

[e] *Universal reproach.*

This sentiment is very just, and not unlike what Florus says, in his character of Tarquin the Proud: "In omnes superbia, quæ crudelitate gravior est bonis, grassatus," lib. i. c. 7. So also Spenser, F. Q. IV. iv. 4.

For evil deeds may better than bad ones be bore.—THYER.

Beaumont and Fletcher express the same sentiment very well, "Beggar's Bush," a. ii. s. 3.

A good man bears contumely worse
Than he would do an injury.—NEWTON.

[f] *Go, Michael.*

As this battle of the angels is founded principally on Rev. xii. 7, 8,—"There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon: and the Dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven,"—Michael is rightly made by Milton the leader of the heavenly armies: and the name in Hebrew signifies *the power of God.* But it may be censured, perhaps, as a piece of wrong conduct in the poem, that the commission here given is not executed: they are ordered to drive the rebel angels "out from God and bliss;" but this is effected at last by the Messiah alone. Some reasons for it are assigned in the speech of God, v. 680; and in that of the Messiah, v. 801, of this book.—NEWTON.

This circumstance is, I believe, the most indefensible part of the whole poem. The commission is not only given, but the execution of it is in a certain degree foreshown. See v. 51, &c.—DUNSTER.

And thou, in military prowess next,
Gabriel, lead forth to battel these my sons
Invincible; lead forth my armed saints,
By thousands and by millions, ranged for fight,
Equal in number to that godless crew
Rebellious: them with fire and hostile arms
Fearless assault; and, to the brow of heaven
Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss,
Into their place of punishment, the gulf
Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide
His fiery chaos to receive their fall.
So spake the sovran voice, and clouds began [g]
To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames [h], the sign
Of wrath awaked; nor with less dread the loud
Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow:
At which command the powers militant,
That stood for heaven, in mighty quadrate join'd
Of union irresistible, moved on
In silence their bright legions, to the sound
Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
Heroic ardour to adventurous deeds
Under their godlike leaders, in the cause
Of God and his Messiah. On they move
Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill,
Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides
Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground [i]
Their march was, and the passive air upbore
Their nimble tread: as when the total kind [j]

[g] *And clouds began.*

In this description the author manifestly alludes to that of God descending upon Mount Sinai. Exod. xix. 16, &c.—NEWTON.

[h] *Reluctant flames.*

Dunster says this word *reluctant* is misunderstood by Newton: *luctari* is to be interpreted "prorumpendi impetus," and that *reluctari* is the highest degree of that "impetus." Here it is the most violent exertion of the fire to resist and break through the smoke.

[i] *For high above the ground.*

Our author attributes the same kind of motion to the angels as the ancients did to their gods; which was gliding through the air without ever touching the ground with their feet, or, as Milton elsewhere elegantly expresses it (b. viii. 302), "smooth-sliding, without step;" and Homer, Il. v. 778, compares the motions of two goddesses to the flight of doves, as Milton here compares the march of the angels to the birds coming on the wing to Adam to receive their names.—NEWTON.

[j] *As when the total kind.*

Homer has used the simile of a flight of fowls twice in his Iliad, to express the number and the motions, the order and the clamour, of an army. See Il. ii. 459, iii. 2, as Virgil has done the same number of times in his Æneid, vii. 699, x. 264. But this simile exceeds any of those: first, as it rises so naturally out of the subject, and was a comparison so familiar to Adam: secondly, the angels were marching through the air, and not on the ground, which gives it another propriety; and here I believe the poet intended the chief likeness: thirdly, the *total kind* of birds much more properly expresses a prodigious number than any particular species, or a collection in any

Of birds, in orderly array on wing,
Came summon'd over Eden to receive
Their names of thee; so over many a tract
Of heaven they march'd, and many a province wide,
Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last,
Far in the horizon to the north appear'd
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretch'd
In battailous aspect, and nearer view[k]
Bristled with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets throng'd, and shields
Various, with boastful argument portray'd,
The banded powers of Satan hasting on
With furious expedition; for they ween'd
That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,
To win the mount of God, and on his throne
To set the envier of his state, the proud
Aspirer: but their thoughts proved fond and vain
In the mid way. Though strange to us it seem'd
At first, that angel should with angel war,
And in fierce hosting[l] meet, who wont to meet
So oft in festivals of joy and love
Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,
Hymning the Eternal Father: but the shout
Of battel now began, and rushing sound
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
High in the midst, exalted as a god,
The apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat,
Idol[m] of majesty divine, enclosed
With flaming cherubim and golden shields;
Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now
'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,
A dreadful interval[n]; and front to front
Presented stood in terrible array
Of hideous length. Before the cloudy van,
On the rough edge of battel ere it join'd,
Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,
Came towering, arm'd in adamant and gold.

particular place. Thus Milton has raised the image in proportion to his subject. See an "Essay upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients," p. 9.—NEWTON.

[k] *And nearer view.*

To the north appeared a fiery region, and nearer to the view appeared the banded powers of Satan. It appeared a fiery region indistinctly at first, but upon nearer view it proved to be Satan's rebel army.—NEWTON.

This image is amazingly picturesque and magnificent.

[l] *Hosting.*

Hosting, the mustering of armed men.—TODD.

[m] *Idol.*

Idol must here mean representative.

[n] *A dreadful interval.*

A grand picture, nobly expressed.

Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds;
And thus his own undaunted heart explores:
O heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest
Should yet remain, where faith and reälty
Remain not: wherefore should not strength and might
There fail where virtue fails[o]? or weakest prove
Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable?
His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,
I mean to try, whose reason I have tried
Unsound and false: nor is it aught but just,
That he, who in debate of truth hath won,
Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
Victor; though brutish that contest and foul,
When reason hath to deal with force; yet so
Most reason is that reason overcome.
So pondering, and, from his armed peers
Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met
His daring foe, at this prevention more
Incensed, and thus securely him defied:
Proud, art thou met? thy hope was to have reach'd
The highth of thy aspiring unoppos'd;
The throne of God unguarded, and his side
Abandon'd, at the terrour of thy power
Or potent tongue: fool! not to think how vain
Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms;
Who out of smallest things could, without end,
Have raised incessant armies to defeat
Thy folly; or with solitary hand
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow,
Unaided, could have finish'd thee, and whelm'd
Thy legions under darkness: but thou seest
All are not of thy train; there be, who faith
Prefer, and piety to God, though then
To thee not visible, when I alone
Seem'd in thy world erroneous to dissent
From all: my sect thou seest; now learn too late
How few sometimes may know[p], when thousands err.
Whom the grand foe, with scornful eye askance,
Thus answer'd:—Ill for thee, but in wish'd hour
Of my revenge first sought for, thou return'st
From flight, seditious angel! to receive
Thy merited reward, the first assay
Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue,
Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose

[o] *There fail where virtue fails.*

This is very sublime, both in thought and words.

[p] *How few sometimes may know.*

Clearly alluding to his own singular opinions on certain topics.

A third part of the gods, in synod met
Their deities to assert; who, while they feel
Vigour divine within them, can allow
Omnipotence to none. But well thou comest
Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
From me some plume, that thy success may show
Destruction to the rest: this pause between,
(Unanswer'd lest thou boast) to let thee know.—
At first I thought that liberty and heaven
To heavenly souls had been all one; but now
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
Ministering spirits, train'd up in feast and song:
Such hast thou arm'd, the minstrelsy of heaven,
Servility with freedom to contend,
As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.
  To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern replied:
Apostate, still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
Of erring, from the path of truth remote:
Unjustly thou depravest it with the name
Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebell'd
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthrall'd;
Yet lewdly darest our ministering upbraid.
Reign thou in hell, thy kingdom[q]; let me serve
In heaven God ever bless'd, and his divine
Behests obey, worthiest to be obey'd:
Yet chains in hell, not realms, expect: meanwhile
From me return'd, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
This greeting on thy impious crest receive.
  So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
Such ruin intercept; ten paces huge
He back recoil'd; the tenth on bended knee
His massy spear upstay'd: as if on earth
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
Sidelong had push'd a mountain from his seat[r],
Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
The rebel thrones, but greater rage, to see

[q] *In hell, thy kingdom.*

Design'd as a contrast to Satan's vaunt, in b. i. 263:—

Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.—NEWTON.

[r] *A mountain from his seat.*

A more magnificent simile can scarcely be conceived.

Thus foil'd their mightiest; ours joy fill'd, and shout,
Presage of victory, and fierce desire
Of battel: whereat Michael bid sound
The archangel trumpet: through the vast of heaven
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
Hosanna to the Highest: nor stood at gaze
The adverse legions, nor less hideous join'd
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
And clamour such as heard in heaven till now
Was never; arms on armour clashing bray'd
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots raged: dire was the noise
Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And flying vaulted either host with fire[s].
So under fiery cope together rush'd
Both battels main, with ruinous assault
And inextinguishable rage. All heaven
Resounded; and had earth been then, all earth
Had to her centre shook. What wonder? when
Millions of fierce encountering angels fought
On either side, the least of whom could wield
These elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions; how much more of power
Army against army numberless to raise
Dreadful combustion warring; and disturb,
Though not destroy, their happy native seat:
Had not the eternal King omnipotent,
From his strong hold of heaven, high overruled
And limited their might: though number'd such[t],
As each divided legion might have seem'd
A numerous host; in strength each armed hand
A legion; led in fight, yet leader seem'd
Each warriour, single as in chief; expert
When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
Of battel, open when, and when to close
The ridges of grim war: no thought of flight,

[s] *And flying vaulted either host with fire.*

Our author has frequently had his eye upon Hesiod's giant-war, as well as upon Homer, and has imitated several passages; but commonly exceeds his original, as he has done in this particular. Hesiod says that the Titans were overshadowed with darts, Theog. v. 716.

Κατὰ δ' ἐσκίασαν βελέεσσι
Τιτῆνας·

but Milton has improved the horror of the description; and a "shade of darts" is not near so great and dreadful an image as a "fiery cope," or "vault of flaming darts." —NEWTON.

[t] *Though number'd such.*

Each legion was in number like an army; each single warrior was in strength like a legion, and, though led in fight, was as expert as a commander-in-chief; so that the angels are celebrated: first, for their number; then, for their strength; and, lastly, for their expertness in war.—NEWTON.

None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
That argued fear; each on himself relied,
As only in his arm the moment lay
Of victory[u]: deeds of eternal fame
Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread
That war and various; sometimes on firm ground
A standing fight; then soaring on main wing,
Tormented all the air; all air seem'd then
Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale
The battel hung; till Satan, who that day
Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms
No equal, ranging through the dire attack
Of fighting seraphim confused, at length
Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and fell'd
Squadrons at once; with huge two-handed sway
Brandish'd aloft, the horrid edge came down
Wide-wasting: such destruction to withstand
He hasted, and oppose the rocky orb
Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,
A vast circumference. At his approach,
The great archangel from his warlike toil
Surceased; and glad, as hoping here to end
Intestine war in heaven, the arch-foe subdued
Or captive dragg'd in chains, with hostile frown
And visage all inflamed, first thus began:
  Authour of evil[v], unknown till thy revolt,
Unnamed in heaven; now plenteous as thou seest
These acts of hateful strife, hateful to all,
Though heaviest by just measure on thyself
And thy adherents: how hast thou disturb'd
Heaven's blessed peace, and into nature brought
Misery uncreated till the crime
Of thy rebellion! how hast thou instill'd

[u] *In his arm the moment lay*
Of victory.

The moment—the weight that turns the balance, as the word signifies in Latin; Terence, Andr.: "Dum in dubio est animus, paulo momento huc vel illuc impellitur:" and, as he has employed here the metaphor of the weight, so of the scale, v. 245, using as a metaphor what Homer makes a simile of, Il. xii. 433; and in several particulars he has had his eye upon Homer, and commonly exceeds his master. Homer says, that the Greeks and Trojans "fought like burning fire," Il. xiii. 673; and how much stronger is it in Milton, that the war

Tormented all the air; all air seemed then
Conflicting fire!

It would be entering into too minute a detail of criticism to mention every little circumstance that is copied from Homer: and, where he does not directly copy from Homer, his style and colouring are still very much in Homer's manner. Wonderful as his genius was, he could hardly have drawn the battles of the angels so well, without first reading those in the Iliad; and Homer taught him to excel Homer.—NEWTON.

[v] *Authour of evil.*

J. C. Walker here refers to "Chron. de Monstrelet," i. 39.

Thy malice into thousands, once upright
And faithful, now proved false! But think not here
To trouble holy rest; heaven casts thee out
From all her confines: heaven, the seat of bliss,
Brooks not the works of violence and war.
Hence then, and evil go with thee along,
Thy offspring, to the place of evil, hell:
Thou and thy wicked crew! there mingle broils,
Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom;
Or some more sudden vengeance, wing'd from God,
Precipitate thee with augmented pain.
  So spake the prince of angels; to whom thus
The adversary;—Nor think thou with wind
Of aery threats to awe whom yet with deeds
Thou canst not. Hast thou turn'd the least of these
To flight? or if to fall, but that they rise
Unvanquish'd, easier to transact with me
That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats
To chase me hence? err not, that so shall end
The strife which thou call'st evil, but we style
The strife of glory; which we mean to win,
Or turn this heaven itself into the hell
Thou fablest; here however to dwell free,
If not to reign: meanwhile thy utmost force,
And join him named Almighty to thy aid,
I fly not; but have sought thee far and nigh.
  They ended parle, and both address'd for fight
Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
Of angels, can relate, or to what things
Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift
Human imagination to such highth
Of godlike power? for likest gods they seem'd,
Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,
Fit to decide the empire of great heaven.
Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air
Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields
Blazed opposite, while expectation stood
In horrour: from each hand with speed retired,
Where erst was thickest fight, the angelic throng,
And left large field, unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion; such as, to set forth
Great things by small, if, nature's concord broke,
Among the constellations war were sprung,
Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.
Together both, with next to Almighty arm
Uplifted eminent, one stroke they aim'd
That might determine, and not need repeat,

As not of power at once; nor odds appear'd
In might or swift prevention: but the sword
Of Michael from the armoury of God
Was given him temper'd so, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge: it met
The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor stay'd,
But with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared
All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,
And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore
The griding sword with discontinuous wound
Pass'd through him: but the ethereal substance closed,
Not long divisible; and from the gash
A stream of nectarous humour issuing flow'd
Sanguine, such as celestial spirits may bleed,
And all his armour stain'd, erewhile so bright.
Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run
By angels many and strong, who interposed
Defence: while others bore him on their shields
Back to his chariot, where it stood retired
From off the files of war: there they him laid
Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame,
To find himself not matchless, and his pride
Humbled by such rebuke; so far beneath
His confidence to equal God in power.
Yet soon he heal'd; for spirits that live throughout
Vital in every part, not as frail man
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,
Cannot but by annihilating die;
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
Receive, no more than can the fluid air:
All heart they live[w], all head, all eye, all ear,
All intellect, all sense; and, as they please,
They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.
  Meanwhile in other parts like deeds deserved
Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,
And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array
Of Moloch, furious king; who him defied,
And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound
Threaten'd, nor from the Holy One of heaven
Refrain'd his tongue blasphemous; but anon,
Down cloven to the waist, with shatter'd arms
And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing,
Uriel, and Raphael, his vaunting foe,

[w] *All heart they live, &c.*

This is expressed very much like Pliny's account of God, Nat. Hist. l. i. c. 7. "Quisquis est Deus, si modo est alius, quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus visus, totus auditus, totus animæ, totus animi, totus sui."—NEWTON.

Though huge, and in a rock of diamond arm'd,
Vanquish'd Adramelech and Asmodai,
Two potent thrones, that to be less than gods
Disdain'd, but meaner thoughts learn'd in their flight,
Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow
Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence
Of Ramiel scorch'd and blasted, overthrew.
I might relate of thousands[x], and their names
Eternise here on earth; but those elect
Angels, contented with their fame in heaven,
Seek not the praise of men: the other sort,
In might though wondrous and in acts of war,
Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
Cancell'd from heaven and sacred memory,
Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell:
For strengh from truth divided and from just,
Illaudable, naught merits but dispraise
And ignominy; yet to glory aspires
Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
Therefore eternal silence be their doom.
  And now, their mightiest quell'd, the battel swerved,
With many an inroad gored; deformed rout
Enter'd, and foul disorder; all the ground
With shiver'd armour strown, and on a heap
Chariot and charioteer lay overturn'd,
And fiery foaming steeds; what stood, recoil'd
O'erwearied, through the faint Satanic host
Defensive scarce; or with pale fear surprised,
Then first with fear surprised, and sense of pain,
Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
By sin of disobedience; till that hour[y]
Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
Far otherwise the inviolable saints,
In cubic phalanx firm, advanced entire,
Invulnerable, impenetrably arm'd;
Such high advantages their innocence
Gave them above their foes; not to have sinn'd,

[x] *I might relate of thousands.*

The poet here puts into the mouth of the angel an excellent reason for not relating more particulars of this first battle. It would have been improper, on all accounts, to have enlarged much more upon it; but it was proper that the angel should appear to know more than he chose to relate, or than the poet was able to make him relate.—NEWTON.

[y] *Till that hour.*

It seems a very extraordinary circumstance attending a battle, that not only none of the warriors on either side were capable of death by wound, but on one side none were capable of wound, or even of pain. This is a very great advantage on the side of the good angels; but we must suppose that the rebel angels did not know their own weakness *till this hour.*—NEWTON.

Not to have disobey'd; in fight they stood
Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pain'd
By wound, though from their place by violence moved[a].
  Now Night her course began, and, over heaven
Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,
And silence on the odious din of war:
Under her cloudy covert both retired,
Victor and vanquish'd. On the foughten field
Michaël and his angels prevalent
Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
Cherubic waving fires[a]: on the other part,
Satan with his rebellious disappeared,
Far in the dark dislodged; and, void of rest,
His potentates to council call'd by night;
And in the midst thus undismay'd began:
  O now in danger tried[b], now known in arms
Not to be overpower'd, companions dear,
Found worthy not of liberty alone,
Too mean pretence! but what we more affect,
Honour, dominion, glory, and renown;
Who have sustain'd one day in doubtful fight
(And if one day, why not eternal days?)
What heaven's Lord had powerfulest to send
Against us from about his throne, and judged
Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
But proves not so: then fallible, it seems,
Of future we may deem him, though till now
Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly arm'd,
Some disadvantage we endured, and pain
Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemned;
Since now we find this our empyreal form
Incapable of mortal injury,

[a] *Though from their place by violence moved.*

This circumstance is judiciously added to prepare the reader for what happens in the next fight.—NEWTON.

[a] *Cherubic waving fires.*

Their watches were "cherubic waving fires;" that is, cherubim like fires waving; the cherubim being described by our author, agreeably to Scripture, as of a fiery substance and nature.—NEWTON.

[b] *O now in danger tried.*

This speech of Satan is very artful: he flatters their pride and vanity, and avails himself of the only comfort that could be drawn from this day's engagement (though it was a false comfort), that God was neither so powerful nor wise as he was taken to be: he was forced to acknowledge that they had suffered some loss and pain, but endeavours to lessen it as much as he can; and attributes it not to the true cause, but to their want of better arms and armour, with which he therefore proposes that they should provide themselves, in order both to defend themselves, and annoy their enemies.—NEWTON.

The five lines in which the speech opens are splendidly magnificent. Instead of considering the language here used as assumed by Satan "to flatter the pride and vanity of his followers," they may be appreciated as serving eminently to mark his own character, as more generally drawn by the poet in the course of this poem; the great features of which are unbounded ambition and undaunted resolution, still proudly hoping, and still daringly contending, even in the midst of adversities.—DUNSTER.

Imperishable; and, though pierced with wound,
Soon closing, and by native vigour heal'd.
Of evil then so small, as easy think
The remedy; perhaps more valid arms,
Weapons more violent, when next we meet,
May serve to better us, and worse our foes;
Or equal what between us made the odds,
In nature none: if other hidden cause
Left them superiour, while we can preserve
Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,
Due search and consultation will disclose.
  He sat; and in the assembly next upstood,
Nisroch[e], of principalities the prime;
As one he stood escaped from cruel fight,
Sore toil'd, his riven arms to havoc hewn;
And, cloudy in aspect, thus answering spake:
  Deliverer from new lords, leaders to free
Enjoyment of our right as gods; yet hard
For gods, and too unequal work we find,
Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
Against unpain'd, impassive; from which evil
Ruin must needs ensue; for what avails
Valour or strength, though matchless, quell'd with pain
Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well
Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine,
But live content, which is the calmest life:
But pain is perfect misery, the worst
Of evils[d], and, excessive, overturns
All patience. He who therefore can invent
With what more forcible we may offend
Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm
Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves
No less than for deliverance what we owe.
  Whereto with look composed Satan replied:
Not uninvented that, which thou aright
Believest so main to our success, I bring.
Which of us, who beholds the bright surface
Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand,
This continent of spacious heaven, adorn'd

[e] *Nisroch.*

A god of the Assyrians, in whose temple Sennacherib was killed by his two sons, 2 Kings, xix. 37. It is not known who this deity was: he must have been a principal idol, being worshipped by so great a prince, and at the capital city Nineveh; which may justify Milton in calling him "of principalities the prime."—NEWTON.

[d] *Pain—the worst of evils.*

Nisroch is made to talk agreeably to the sentiments of Hieronymus and those philosophers who maintained that pain was the greatest of evils: there might be a possibility of living without pleasure, but there was no living in pain: a notion suitable enough to a deity of the effeminate Assyrians.—NEWTON.

With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems, and gold;
Whose eye so superficially surveys
These things, as not to mind from whence they grow
Deep underground, materials dark and crude,
Of spirituous and fiery spume; till touch'd
With heaven's ray, and temper'd, they shoot forth
So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?
These in their dark nativity the deep
Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame;
Which, into hollow engines[e] long and round,
Thick-ramm'd, at the other bore with touch of fire
Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
From far, with thundering noise, among our foes
Such implements of mischief, as shall dash
To pieces and o'erwhelm whatever stands
Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarm'd
The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.
Nor long shall be our labour; yet ere dawn,
Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive;
Abandon fear; to strength and counsel join'd
Think nothing hard, much less to be despair'd.
He ended; and his words their drooping cheer
Enlighten'd, and their languish'd hope revived:
The invention all admired, and each, how he
To be the inventer miss'd[f]; so easy it seem'd
Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought
Impossible: yet, haply, of thy race
In future days[g], if malice should abound,
Some one, intent on mischief, or inspired
With devilish machination, might devise
Like instrument to plague the sons of men
For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
Forthwith from council to the work they flew:
None arguing stood; innumerable hands
Were ready; in a moment up they turn'd
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath
The originals of nature in their crude
Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam[h]

[e] *Hollow engines.*

A description of artillery, of which the first invention is thus attributed to the author of all evil.

[f] *Admired, and each, how he*
To be the inventer miss'd.

This is the definition Johnson gives of good writing.

[g] *In future days.*

This speaking in the spirit of prophecy adds great dignity to poetry. It is in the same spirit that Dido makes the imprecation, Virg. Æn. iv. 625: "Exoriare aliquis," &c. This, here, very properly comes from the mouth of an angel.—NEWTON.

[h] *Sulphurous and nitrous foam.*

See Valvasone, with Hayley's remarks, in "Conjectures on the Origin of Paradise Lost."

They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art,
Concocted and adusted they reduced
To blackest grain, and into store convey'd.
Part hidden veins digg'd up (nor hath this earth
Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,
Whereof to found their engines and their balls
Of missive ruin; part incentive reed
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire.
So all ere dayspring, under conscious night,
Secret they finish'd, and in order set,
With silent circumspection, unespied.
  Now when fair morn orient in heaven appear'd,
Up rose the victor-angels, and to arms
The matin trumpet sung: in arms they stood
Of golden panoply [i]; refulgent host,
Soon banded; others from the dawning hills [j]
Look'd round, and scouts each coast light-armed scour,
Each quarter: to descry the distant foe,
Where lodged, or whither fled; or if for fight,
In motion or in halt: him soon they met
Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow
But firm battalion. Back with speediest sail,
Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,
Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried:
  Arm, warriours, arm for fight; the foe at hand,
Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit.
This day, fear not his flight; so thick a cloud
He comes: and settled in his face I see
Sad resolution, and secure. Let each
His adamantine coat gird well, and each
Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbed shield,
Borne even or high; for this day will pour down,
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,
But rattling storm of arrows barb'd with fire.
  So warn'd he them, aware themselves; and soon
In order, quit of all impediment,
Instant without disturb they took alarm,
And onward moved embattel'd; when, behold!
Not distant far with heavy pace the foe
Approaching gross and huge; in hollow cube
Training his devilish enginery, impaled
On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,

[i] *Panoply.*

Armour from head to foot. Πανοπλία, Greek, armour at all points.—HUME.

[j] *Dawning hills.*

This epithet is usually applied to the *light*, but here very poetically to the *hills;* the dawn first appearing over them, and they seeming to bring the rising day; as the evening-star is said likewise first to appear *on his hill-top*, b. viii. 520.—NEWTON.

Thus the morning-sun always first *dawns* over the Alps.

To hide the fraud. At interview both stood
Awhile; but suddenly at head appear'd
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:
  Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold;
That all may see, who hate us, how we seek
Peace and composure, and with open breast
Stand ready to receive them, if they like
Our overture, and turn not back perverse:
But that I doubt; however witness, heaven;
Heaven, witness thou anon, while we discharge
Freely our part: ye, who appointed stand,
Do as you have in charge; and briefly touch
What we propound, and loud that all may hear.
  So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce
Had ended; when to right and left the front
Divided[k], and to either flank retired:
Which to our eyes discover'd, new and strange,
A triple mounted row of pillars laid
On wheels (for like to pillars most they seem'd,
Or hollow'd bodies made of oak or fir
With branches lopp'd, in wood or mountain fell'd);
Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths
With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
Portending hollow truce: at each behind
A seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
Stood waving tipp'd with fire; while we, suspense,
Collected stood, within our thoughts amused:
Not long; for sudden all at once their reeds
Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
But soon obscured with smoke, all heaven appear'd,
From those deep-throated engines belch'd, whose roar
Embowel'd with outrageous noise the air,
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
Their devilish glut, chain'd thunderbolts and hail
Of iron globes; which on the victor host
Level'd, with such impetuous fury smote,
That, whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,
Though standing else as rocks; but down they fell
By thousands, angel on archangel roll'd;
The sooner for their arms: unarm'd they might
Have easily, as spirits, evaded swift
By quick contraction or remove; but now
Foul dissipation follow'd, and forced rout;
Nor served it to relax their serried files.
What should they do? if on they rush'd, repulse

[k] *Divided.*

Nothing can be more distinct, picturesque, and grand, than this advance of Satan's army with his masked artillery.

Repeated, and indecent overthrow
Doubled, would render them yet more despised,
And to their foes a laughter; for in view
Stood rank'd of seraphim another row,
In posture to displode their second tire
Of thunder: back defeated to return
They worse abhorr'd. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his mates thus in derision call'd:
  O friends, why come not on these victors proud?
Erewhile they fierce were coming; and when we,
To entertain them fair with open front
And breast (what could we more?) propounded terms
Of composition, straight they changed their minds,
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
As they would dance; yet for a dance they seem'd
Somewhat extravagant, and wild, perhaps
For joy of offer'd peace: but I suppose,
If our proposals once again were heard,
We should compel them to a quick result.
  To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood:
Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home;
Such as we might perceive amused them all,
And stumbled many: who receives them right,
Had need from head to foot well understand;
Not understood, this gift they had besides,
They show us when our foes walk not upright.
  So they among themselves in pleasant vein
Stood scoffing, heightened in their thoughts beyond
All doubt of victory; Eternal Might
To match with their inventions they presumed
So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn,
And all his host derided while they stood
Awhile in trouble: but they stood not long;
Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms
Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.
Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,
Which God hath in his mighty angels placed!)
Their arms away they threw, and to the hills
(For earth hath this variety from heaven
Of pleasure situate in hill and dale)
Light as the lightning glimpse[1] they ran, they flew;
From their foundations loosening to and fro,
They pluck'd the seated hills with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands. Amaze,

[1] *Light as the lightning glimpse.*

See Ezek. i. 14. "And the living creatures ran and returned, as the appearance of a flash of lightning."—DUNSTER.

Be sure, and terrour, seized the rebel host,
When coming towards them so dread they saw
The bottom of the mountains upward turn'd;
Till on those cursed engines' triple row
They saw them whelm'd, and all their confidence
Under the weight of mountains buried deep;
Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
Main promontories flung, which in the air
Came shadowing and oppressed whole legions arm'd.
Their armour help'd their harm, crush'd in and bruised
Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain
Implacable and many a dolorous groan;
Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind
Out of such prison, though spirits of purest light,
Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown [m].
The rest, in imitation, to like arms
Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore:
So hills amid the air encountered hills,
Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire,
That underground they fought in dismal shade;
Infernal noise! war seem'd a civil game
To this uproar; horrid confusion heap'd
Upon confusion rose: and now all heaven
Had gone to wrack [n] with ruin overspread,
Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits
Shrined in his sanctuary of heaven secure,
Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
This tumult, and permitted all, advised:
That his great purpose he might so fulfil,
To honour his anointed Son avenged
Upon his enemies; and to declare

[m] *Now gross by sinning grown.*

What a fine moral does Milton here inculcate, and indeed quite through this book, by showing that all the weakness and pain of the rebel angels was the natural consequence of their sinning! And, I believe, one may observe in general of our author, that he is scarcely ever so far hurried on by the fire of his Muse, as to forget the main end of all good writing—the recommendation of virtue and religion.—THYER.

[n] *And now all heaven*
Had gone to wrack.

It is remarked by the critics, in praise of Homer's battles, that they rise in horror one above another to the end of the Iliad. The same may be said of Milton's battles. In the first day's engagement, when they fought under a cope of fire with burning arrows, it was said,

All heaven
Resounded; and, had earth been then, all earth
Had to her centre shook:

but now, when they fought with mountains and promontories, it is said, "all heaven had gone to wrack," had not the Almighty Father interposed, and sent forth his Son, in the fulness of his divine glory and majesty, to expel the rebel angels out of heaven. Compare Homer's Iliad, viii. 130.

Ἔνθα κε λοιγὸς ἔην, καὶ ἀμήχανα ἔργα γένοντο·
Εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὀξὺ νόησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.—NEWTON.

All power on him transferr'd: whence to his Son,
The Assessour of his throne, he thus began:
Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved;
Son, in whose face invisible is beheld
Visibly, what by Deity I am;
And in whose hand what by decree I do,
Second Omnipotence; two days are pass'd,
Two days, as we compute the days of heaven,
Since Michael and his powers went forth to tame
These disobedient: sore hath been their fight,
As likeliest was, when two such foes met arm'd:
For to themselves I left them; and thou know'st
Equal in their creation they were form'd,
Save what sin hath impair'd; which yet hath wrought
Insensibly, for I suspend their doom:
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
Endless, and no solution will be found.
War wearied hath perform'd[o] what war can do,
And to disorder'd rage let loose the reins,
With mountains, as with weapons, arm'd; which makes
Wild work in heaven, and dangerous to the main.
Two days are therefore pass'd, the third is thine:
For thee I have ordain'd it, and thus far
Have suffer'd, that the glory may be thine
Of ending this great war, since none but thou
Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
Immense I have transfused that all may know
In heaven and hell thy power above compare;
And, this perverse commotion govern'd thus,
To manifest thee worthiest to be heir,
Of all things to be heir; and to be King
By sacred unction[p], thy deserved right.
Go then, thou mightiest in thy Father's might
Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels
That shake heaven's basis, bring forth all my war,

[o] *War wearied hath perform'd.*

And indeed within the compass of this one book we have all the variety of battles that can well be conceived. We have a single combat and a general engagement. The first day's fight is with darts and swords, in imitation of the ancients; the second day's fight is with artillery, in imitation of the moderns; but the images in both are raised proportionably to the superior nature of the beings here described: and, when the poet has briefly comprised all that has any foundation in fact and reality, he has recourse to the fiction of the poets in their description of the giants' war with the gods. And, when war hath thus performed what war can do, he rises still higher, and the Son of God is sent forth in the majesty of the Almighty Father, agreeably to Scripture; so much doth the sublimity of Holy Writ transcend all that is true, and all that is feigned, in description.—NEWTON.

[p] *By sacred unction.*

Psalm xlv. 7:—"God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."—GILLIES.

My bow and thunder; my almighty arms[q]
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;
Pursue these sons of darkness; drive them out
From all heaven's bounds into the utter deep:
There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
God, and Messiah his anointed King.
He said; and on his Son with rays direct
Shone full: he all his Father full express'd
Ineffably into his face received;
And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake:
O Father, O Supreme of heavenly thrones,
First, Highest, Holiest, Best; thou always seek'st
To glorify thy Son[r], I always thee,
As is most just: this I my glory account,
My exaltation, and my whole delight,
That thou, in me well pleased, declarest thy will
Fulfill'd, which to fulfil is all my bliss.
Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume;
And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
Thou shalt be all in all[s], and I in thee
For ever; and in me all whom thou lovest:
But whom thou hatest, I hate; and can put on
Thy terrours, as I put thy mildness on,
Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,
Arm'd with thy might, rid heaven of these rebell'd,
To their prepar'd ill mansion driven down,
To chains of darkness[t], and the undying worm[u];
That from thy just obedience could revolt,
Whom to obey is happiness entire.
Then shall thy saints unmix'd, and from the impure
Far separate, circling thy holy mount,

[q] *My almighty arms.*

Ps. xlv. 3, 4:—"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty: and in thy majesty ride prosperously."—NEWTON.

[r] *To glorify thy Son.*

In reference to St. John xvii. 4, 5.—TODD.

[s] *Thou shalt be all in all.*

We may still observe, that Milton generally makes the divine persons talk in the style and language of Scripture. This passage is manifestly taken from 1 Cor. xv. 24 and 28. Immediately afterwards when it is said,

I in thee
For ever; and in me all whom thou lovest;

this is an allusion to John xvii. 21 and 23. And when it is added,

But whom thou hatest, I hate,

the allusion is to Psalm cxxxix. 21.—NEWTON.

[t] *To chains of darkness.*

2 Pet. ii. 4:—"God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into *chains of darkness*."—TODD.

[u] *Undying worm.*

Mark ix. 44:—"Their worm dieth not."—HUME.

Unfeigned halleluiahs to thee sing,
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.
So said, he, o'er his sceptre bowing, rose
From the right hand of Glory where he sat;
And the third sacred morn[v] began to shine,
Dawning through heaven: forth rush'd with whirlwind sound[w]
The chariot of paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn[x],
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoy'd
By four cherubic shapes; four faces each[y]
Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between[z];

[v] *And the third sacred morn.*

Milton, by continuing the war for three days, and reserving the victory upon the third for the Messiah alone, plainly alludes to the circumstances of his death and resurrection. Our Saviour's extreme sufferings on the one hand, and his heroic behaviour on the other, made the contest seem to be more equal and doubtful upon the first day; and on the second, Satan triumphed in the advantages he thought he had gained, when Christ lay buried in the earth, and was to outward appearance in an irrecoverable state of corruption. But as the poet represents the Almighty Father speaking to his Son, v. 699:—

Two days are therefore past, the third is thine;
For thee I have ordain'd it; and thus far
Have suffer'd, that the glory may be thine
Of ending this great war, since none but thou
Can end it:

which he most gloriously did, when "the third sacred morn began to shine," by vanquishing with his own Almighty arm the powers of hell, and rising again from the grave: and thus, as St. Paul says, Rom. i. 4:—"He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."—GREENWOOD.

[w] *Forth rush'd with whirlwind sound.*

Ezek. i. 4:—"And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire enfolding itself." Or perhaps Milton here drew Isaiah likewise to his assistance, lxvi. 15:—"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind."—NEWTON.

[x] *Wheel within wheel undrawn.*

As in Ezek. i. 5, 16, 19, 20:—"Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures, and their appearance was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel: and when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels."—NEWTON.

[y] *Four faces each.*

As in Ezek. i. 6:—"And every one had four faces:" again, ch. x. 12:—"And their whole body, and their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes round about."—NEWTON.

[z] *The wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between.*

The beryl is a precious stone of a sea-green colour, and careering fires are lightnings "darting out by fits," a metaphor taken from the running in tilts. See Ezek. i. 16, and 13:—"The appearance of wheels and their work was like a beryl: and the fire was bright; and out of the fire went forth lightning."—NEWTON.

Milton has again described this part of the prophetic vision, and with additional sublimity, v. 848:—

One spirit in them ruled, and every eye
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
Among the accursed.

This is like the bold and tremendous painting of Æschylus, Prom. Vinct. v. 356, ed. Shütz.

'Εξ ὀμμάτων δ' ἤστραπτε γοργωπὸν σέλας.—TODD.

Over their heads a crystal firmament[a],
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber, and colours of the showery arch.
He, in celestial panoply[b] all arm'd
Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
Ascended; at his right hand Victory
Sat eagle-wing'd; beside him hung his bow
And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored;
And from about him fierce effusion roll'd
Of smoke[c], and bickering flame, and sparkles dire.
Attended with ten thousand thousand saints[d],
He onward came; far off his coming shone:
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
Chariots of God, half on each hand were seen,
He on the wings of cherub rode[e] sublime
On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned,
Illustrious far and wide; but by his own
First seen; them unexpected joy surprised,
When the great ensign of Messiah blazed
Aloft by angels borne, his sign[f] in heaven;
Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced
His army, circumfused on either wing,
Under their Head[g] imbodied all in one.
Before him Power Divine his way prepared:
At his command the uprooted hills retired,

[a] *A crystal firmament.*

See Ezek. i. 22, 26, 27, 28:—"And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creatures, was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above: and above the firmament, that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and I saw as the colour of amber as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain."—NEWTON.

[b] *He, in celestial panoply.*

An allusion to Ephes. vi. 11:—"Put on the whole armour (πανοπλίαν) of God;" and to the contexture of gems in Aaron's breast-plate, Exod. xxviii.—TODD.

[c] *Fierce effusion roll'd*
Of smoke.

See Psalm xviii. 8:—"There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured." And see Psalm l. 3.—HUME.

[d] *Ten thousand thousand saints.*

See St. Jude 14:—"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints." Psalm lxviii. 17:—"The chariots of God are twenty thousand." Rev. vii. 4:—"I heard the number of them." Let it be remarked, how much of his sublimity, even in the sublimest parts of his works, Milton owes to Scripture.—NEWTON.

[e] *Wings of cherub rode.*

See Psalm xviii. 10:—"He rode upon a cherub."—GREENWOOD.

[f] *His sign.*

See Matth. xxiv. 30:—"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven." —GILLIES.

[g] *Under their Head.*

See Rom. xii. 5:—"We, being many, are one body in Christ." And Col. i. 18:—"He is the head of the body."—GREENWOOD.

Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went[h]
Obsequious: heaven his wonted face renew'd,
And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.
This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured,
And to rebellious fight rallied their powers,
Insensate, hope conceiving from despair:
In heavenly spirits could such perverseness dwell?
But to convince the proud what signs avail,
Or wonders move the obdurate to relent?
They, harden'd more[i] by what might most reclaim,
Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
Took envy; and aspiring to his highth,
Stood re-embattel'd fierce, by force or fraud
Weening to prosper, and at length prevail
Against God and Messiah, or to fall
In universal ruin last; and now
To final battel drew, disdaining flight,
Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God
To all his host on either hand thus spake:
Stand still[j] in bright array, ye saints; here stand,
Ye angels arm'd; this day from battel rest:
Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause;
And as ye have received so have ye done,
Invincibly: but of this cursed crew
The punishment to other hand belongs;
Vengeance is his[k], or whose he sole appoints:
Number to this day's work is not ordain'd,
Nor multitude; stand only, and behold
God's indignation on these godless pour'd
By Me; not you, but Me, they have despised,
Yet envied; against Me is all their rage,
Because the Father, to whom in heaven supreme
Kingdom and power and glory appertains,
Hath honour'd Me according to his will.
Therefore to Me their doom he hath assign'd;
That they may have their wish, to try with Me
In battel which the stronger proves; they all,
Or I alone against them; since by strength

[h] *They heard his voice, and went.*

Habakk. iii. 6:—"The everlasting mountains were scattered; the perpetual hills did bow."—TODD.

[i] *Harden'd more.*

As Pharaoh was, Exod. xiv.—HUME.

[j] *Stand still.*

As in Exod. xiv. 13, 14:—"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to day. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."—GILLIES.

[k] *Vengeance is his.*

See Deut. xxxii. 35:—"To me belongeth vengeance." And Rom. xii. 19:—"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."—NEWTON.

They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous, nor care who them excels;
Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.
  So spake the Son; and into terrour changed
His countenance, too severe to be beheld,
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.
At once the Four[l] spread out their starry wings
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs
Of his fierce chariot roll'd as with the sound
Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.
He on his impious foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as night[m]; under his burning wheels[n]
The stedfast empyrean shook throughout,
All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
Among them he arrived; in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in their souls infix'd
Plagues: they, astonish'd, all resistance lost,
All courage; down their idle weapons dropp'd:
O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode
Of thrones and mighty seraphim prostrate;
That wish'd the mountains[o] now might be again
Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.
Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
His arrows from the fourfold-visaged Four,
Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels

[l] *At once the Four.*

Whenever he mentions the four cherubim, and the Messiah's chariot, he still copies from Ezekiel's vision. See ch. i. 9, 19, 24.—NEWTON.

[m] *Gloomy as night.*

From Homer, Il. xii. 462, where the translator uses Milton's words:—

Νυκτὶ θοῇ ἀτάλαντος ὑπώπια.

A similar expression, translated in these words of Milton, is also in Odyss. xi. 609.—NEWTON.

[n] *Under his burning wheels.*

Job xxvi. 11:—"The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof."—HUME.

This sublime passage owes part of its magnificence to another sacred description, Daniel, vii. 9, of the Ancient of Days:—"His throne was as the fiery flame, and his *wheels as burning fire.*" Milton's diction is here superior even to Hesiod's celebrated lines, Theog. v. 841:—

Ποσσὶ δ' ὑπ' ἀθανάτοισι μέγας πελεμίζετ' Ὄλυμπος
Ὀρνυμένοιο ἄνακτος· ἐπεστενάχιζε δὲ γαῖα.

The majesty of the exception, which Milton adds, affords to the whole passage a solemnity unparalleled and inimitable:—

Under his burning wheels
The stedfast empyrean shook throughout,
All but the throne itself of God.—TODD.

[o] *That wish'd the mountains.*

See Rev. vi. 16:—"They said to the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:" which is very applicable here, as they had been overwhelmed with mountains, v. 655. What was so terrible before, they *wished as a shelter* now.—NEWTON.

Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;
One spirit in them ruled; and every eye
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
Among the accursed, that wither'd all their strength,
And of their wonted vigour left them drain'd,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.
Yet half his strength he put not forth[p], but check'd
His thunder in mid volley; for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of heaven:
The overthrown he raised; and as a herd
Of goats or timorous flock together throng'd
Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursued
With terrours and with furies[q] to the bounds
And crystal wall of heaven; which, opening wide,
Roll'd inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
Into the wasteful deep: the monstrous sight
Struck them with horrour backward, but far worse
Urged them behind: headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of heaven: eternal wrath
Burn'd after them to the bottomless pit.
  Hell heard the unsufferable noise; hell saw
Heaven ruining from heaven, and would have fled
Affrighted; but strict fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
Nine days they fell: confounded Chaos roar'd,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy; so huge a rout
Incumber'd him with ruin: hell at last[r]
Yawning received them whole, and on them closed;
Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
Disburden'd heaven rejoiced, and soon repair'd
Her mural breach, returning whence it roll'd.
  Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes,
Messiah his triumphal chariot turn'd:
To meet him[s] all his saints, who silent stood

[p] *Half his strength he put not forth.*

This fine thought is somewhat like that of the Psalmist, lxxviii. 38:—"But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath."—NEWTON.

[q] *With terrours and with furies.*

See Job vi. 4:—"The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." And the fury of the Lord is a common expression in Scripture:—"They are full of the fury of the Lord," Isaiah li. 20.—NEWTON.

[r] *Hell at last Yawning received them.*

This is a fine imitation of Isaiah v. 14:—"Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it."—TODD.

[s] *To meet him.*

See Rev. xii. 10.—STILLINGFLEET.

Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanced; and as they went,
Shaded with branching palm each order bright,
Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given,
Worthiest to reign[t]: he, celebrated, rode
Triumphant through mid heaven, into the courts
And temple of his mighty Father throned
On high; who into glory[u] him received,
Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.
Thus, measuring things in heaven[v] by things on earth,
At thy request, and that thou mayest beware
By what is past, to thee I have reveal'd
What might have else to human race been hid;
The discord which befell, and war in heaven
Among the angelic powers, and the deep fall
Of those too high aspiring, who rebell'd
With Satan; he who envies now thy state,
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that, with him
Bereaved of happiness, thou mayst partake
His punishment, eternal misery;
Which would be all his solace and revenge,
As a despite done against the Most High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.
But listen not to his temptations; warn
Thy weaker[w]; let it profit thee to have heard,
By terrible example, the reward
Of disobedience: firm they might have stood,
Yet fell: remember, and fear to transgress.

[t] *Worthiest to reign.*

The angels here sing the same divine song which St. John heard them sing in his vision, Rev. iv. 11.—NEWTON.

[u] *Who into glory.*

See 1 Tim. iii. 16:—"Received up into glory;" and Heb. i. 3:—"Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."—GILLIES.

[v] *Thus, measuring things in heaven.*

He repeats the same kind of apology here in the conclusion, that he made in the beginning of his narration. See b. v. 573, &c. And it is indeed the best defence that can be made for the bold fictions in this book, which, though some cold readers perhaps may blame, yet the coldest, I conceive, cannot but admire. It is remarkable too with what art and beauty the poet, from the height and sublimity of the rest of the book, descends here, at the close of it, like the lark from her loftiest notes in the clouds, to the most prosaic simplicity of language and numbers; a simplicity, which not only gives it variety, but the greatest majesty; as Milton himself seems to have thought, by always choosing to give the speeches of God and the Messiah in that style, though these I suppose are the parts of this poem which Dryden censures as the flats which he often met with for thirty or forty lines together.—NEWTON.

[w] *Thy weaker.*

As St. Peter calls the wife, "the weaker vessel," 1 Pet. iii. 7.—NEWTON.

BOOK VII.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE seventh book is nothing but delight;—all beauty, and hope, and smiles: it has little of the awful sublimity of the preceding books; and it has much less of that grand invention, which sometimes astonishes with a painful emotion, but which is the first power of a poet: at the same time, there is poetical invention in filling up the details.

In every description Milton has seized the most picturesque feature, and found the most expressive and poetical words for it. On the mirror of his mind all creation was delineated in the clearest and most brilliant forms and colours; and he has reflected them with such harmony and enchantment of language, as has never been equalled.

The globe, with all its rich contents, thus lies displayed before us, like a landscape under the freshness of the dewy light of the opening morning, when the shadows of night first fly away.

Here is to be found everything which in descriptive poetry has the greatest spell: all majesty or grace of forms, animate or inanimate; all variety of mountains, and valleys, and forests, and plains, and seas, and lakes, and rivers; the vicissitudes of suns and of darkness; the flame and the snow; the murmur of the breeze; the roar of the tempest.

One great business of poetry is to teach men to see, and feel, and think upon the beauties of the creation, and to have gratitude and devotion to their Maker: this can best be effected by a poet's eye and a poet's tongue. Poets can present things in lights which can warm the coldest hearts: he who can create himself, can best represent what is already created.

ARGUMENT.

RAPHAEL, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this world was first created; that God, after the expelling of Satan and his angels out of heaven, declared his pleasure to create another world, and other creatures to dwell therein; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of angels, to perform the work of creation in six days; the angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his reascension into heaven.

DESCEND from heaven[a], Urania[b], by that name
If rightly thou art call'd, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing.
The meaning, not the name I call; for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top

[a] *Descend from heaven.*

"Descende cœlo," Hor. Od. iii. 4, 1. He invokes the heavenly Muse as he had done before, b. i. 6: and as he had said in the beginning that he "intended to soar above the Aonian mount," so now he says very truly that he had effected what he intended, and "soars above the Olympian hill, above the flight of Pegasean wing;" that is, his subject was more sublime than the loftiest flight of heathen poets.—NEWTON.

[b] *Urania.*

The word Urania, in Greek, signifies "heavenly."—NEWTON.

Of Old Olympus dwell'st; but heavenly-born,
Before the hills appear'd[c], or fountain flow'd,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song. Up-led by thee,
Into the heaven of heavens I have presumed,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering: with like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element;
Lest from this flying steed unrein'd (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime),
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander, and forlorn.
Half yet remains unsung[d], but narrower bound
Within the visible diurnal sphere:
Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days[e],
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east: still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few:
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers[f], the race
Of that vile rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drown'd

[c] *Before the hills appear'd.*

From Prov. viii. 24, 25, and 30, where the phrase of Wisdom always "rejoicing" before God, is "playing," according to the Vulgate Latin; "ludens coram eo omni tempore."—NEWTON.

[d] *Half yet remains unsung.*

Half of the episode, not of the whole work, is here meant. The episode has two principal parts, the war in heaven, and the new creation.—NEWTON.

[e] *Though fallen on evil days.*

The repetition and turn of the words is very beautiful: a lively picture this, in a few lines, of the poet's wretched condition. Though he was blind, "in darkness; and with dangers compass'd round, and solitude," obnoxious to the government, and having a world of enemies among the royal party, and therefore obliged to live very much in privacy and alone, he was not become hoarse or mute. And what strength of mind was it, that could not only support him under the weight of these misfortunes, but enable him to soar to such heights as no human genius ever reached before!—NEWTON.

[f] *Of Bacchus and his revellers.*

It is not improbable that the poet intended this as an oblique satire upon the dissoluteness of Charles the Second and his Court; from whom he seems to apprehend the fate of Orpheus, who, though he is said to have charmed woods and rocks with his divine songs, was torn to pieces by the Bacchanalian women of Rhodope, a mountain of Thrace; nor could the Muse Calliope, his mother, defend him: "so fail not thou who thee implores." Nor was his wish ineffectual; for the government suffered him to live and die unmolested.—NEWTON.

Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores:
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.
Say, goddess, what ensued, when Raphaël,
The affable archangel, had forewarn'd
Adam, by dire example, to beware
Apostacy, by what befell in heaven
To those apostates; lest the like befall
In Paradise to Adam or his race,
Charged not to touch the interdicted tree,
If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
So easily obey'd amid the choice
Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve,
The story heard attentive, and was fill'd
With admiration and deep muse, to hear
Of things so high and strange; things, to their thought
So unimaginable, as hate in heaven,
And war so near the peace of God and bliss,
With such confusion: but the evil, soon
Driven back, redounded as a flood on those
From whom it sprung; impossible to mix
With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repeal'd
The doubts that in his heart arose; and now
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
What nearer might concern him; how this world
Of heaven and earth conspicuous first began;
When, and whereof created; for what cause;
What within Eden, or without was done
Before his memory: as one, whose drouth
Yet scarce allay'd, still eyes the current stream,
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,
Proceeded thus to ask his heavenly guest:
Great things and full of wonder in our ears,
Far differing from this world, thou hast reveal'd,
Divine interpreter! by favour sent
Down from the empyrean, to forewarn
Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach;
For which to the infinitely Good we owe
Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
Receive, with solemn purpose to observe
Immutably his sovran will, the end
Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsafed
Gently, for our instruction, to impart
Things above earthly thought, which yet concern'd
Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seem'd;
Deign to descend now lower, and relate
What may no less perhaps avail us known;

How first began this heaven which we behold
Distant so high, with moving fires adorn'd
Innumerable; and this which yields or fills
All space, the ambient air wide interfused,
Embracing round this florid earth: what cause
Moved the Creator, in his holy rest
Through all eternity, so late to build
In Chaos; and the work begun, how soon
Absolved; if unforbid thou mayst unfold
What we, not to explore the secrets, ask,
Of his eternal empire, but the more
To magnify his works, the more we know:
And the great light of day[g] yet wants to run
Much of his race though steep; suspense in heaven,
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice, he hears;
And longer will delay to hear thee tell
His generation, and the rising birth
Of Nature from the unapparent deep:
Or if the star of evening and the moon
Haste to thy audience, night with her will bring
Silence; and Sleep, listening to thee, will watch;
Or we can bid his absence, till thy song
End[h], and dismiss thee ere the morning shine.
  Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought;
And thus the godlike angel answer'd mild:
  This also thy request, with caution ask'd,
Obtain; though to recount almighty works
What words or tongue of seraph can suffice,
Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
To glorify the Maker, and infer
Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
Thy hearing; such commission from above
I have received, to answer thy desire
Of knowledge within bounds; beyond, abstain

[g] *And the great light of day.*

Mr. Thyer is of opinion that there is not a greater instance of our author's exquisite skill in the art of poetry than this and the following lines. There is nothing more really to be expressed than Adam's telling Raphael his desire to hear the continuance of his relation: and yet the poet, by a series of strong and noble figures, has worked it up into half a score of as fine lines as any in the poem. Lord Shaftesbury has observed, that Milton's beauties generally depend upon solid thought, strong reasoning, noble passion, and a continued thread of moral doctrine; but in this place he has shown what an exalted fancy and mere force of poetry can do.—NEWTON.

Lord Shaftesbury had not a very accurate idea of Milton's genius; which, if it had all the qualities here ascribed to it, was not less rich and gigantic in imagination and invention.

[h] *Bid his absence, till thy song*
End.

The sun did stand still at the voice of Joshua.—NEWTON.

Milton's favourite Ovid touches upon the suspense of day:—

——— et euntem multa loquendo
Detinuit sermone diem.

To ask; nor let thine own inventions[i] hope
Things not reveal'd, which the invisible King[j],
Only Omniscient, hath suppress'd in night,
To none communicable in earth or heaven;
Enough is left besides to search and know:
But knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain;
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind[k].
  Know then, that, after Lucifer from heaven
(So call him, brighter once amidst the host
Of angels, than that star the stars among)
Fell with his flaming legions through the deep
Into his place, and the great Son return'd
Victorious with his saints, the Omnipotent
Eternal Father from his throne beheld
Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake:
  At least our envious foe hath fail'd, who thought
All like himself rebellious; by whose aid
This inaccessible high strength, the seat
Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,
He trusted to have seized, and into fraud
Drew many, whom their place[l] knows here no more;
Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
Their station; heaven, yet populous, retains
Number sufficient to possess her realms
Though wide, and this high temple to frequent
With ministeries due, and solemn rites:
But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm
Already done, to have dispeopled heaven,
My damage fondly deem'd, I can repair
That detriment, if such it be to lose
Self-lost; and in a moment will create
Another world, out of one man a race
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
Not here; till by degrees of merit raised,

[i] *Thine own inventions.*

So in Psalm cvi. 29: "Thus they provoked him to anger with their own *inventions*."—PEARCE.

[j] *The invisible King.*

As God is styled, 1 Tim. i. 17: "The invisible King," so this is the properest epithet that could have been employed here, when he is speaking of "things not revealed, suppressed in night, to none communicable in earth or heaven," neither to men nor angels; as it is said of the day of judgment, Matt. xxiv. 36: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man: no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."—NEWTON.

[k] *Nourishment to wind.*

See St. Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 1: "Knowledge puffeth up."—TODD.

[l] *Whom their place.*

See Job vii. 10: "Neither shall his place know him any more."—NEWTON.

They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tried;
And earth be changed to heaven, and heaven to earth,
One kingdom, joy and union without end.
Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye powers of heaven;
And thou, my Word, begotten Son, by thee
This I perform; speak thou, and be it done!
My overshadowing Spirit [m] and Might with thee
I send along: ride forth, and bid the deep
Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth;
Boundless the deep, because I Am, who fill
Infinitude; nor vacuous the space;
Though I, uncircumscribed myself, retire,
And put not forth my goodness, which is free
To act or not: necessity and chance
Approach not me, and what I will is fate.
So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake
His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect.
Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
Than time or motion; but to human ears
Cannot without process of speech be told,
So told as earthly notion can receive:
Great triumph and rejoicing was in heaven,
When such was heard declared the Almighty's will;
Glory they sung to the Most High, good will
To future men, and in their dwellings peace:
Glory to him whose just avenging ire
Had driven out the ungodly from his sight
And the habitations of the just; to him
Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordain'd
Good out of evil to create; instead
Of spirits malign, a better race to bring
Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse
His good to worlds and ages infinite.
So sang the hierarchies: meanwhile the Son
On his great expedition now appear'd,
Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crown'd
Of majesty divine: sapience and love
Immense, and all his Father in him shone.
About his chariot numberless were pour'd
Cherub and seraph, potentates and thrones,
And virtues, winged spirits, and chariots wing'd
From the armoury of God; where stand of old
Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged
Against a solemn day, harness'd at hand,
Celestial equipage; and now came forth

[m] *My overshadowing Spirit.*

See Luke i 35: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee."—NEWTON.

Spontaneous, for within them spirit lived,
Attendant on their Lord: heaven open'd wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,
On golden hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.
On heavenly ground they stood; and from the shore
They view'd[n] the vast immeasurable abyss
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole.
  Silence, ye troubled waves[o], and thou deep, peace,
Said then the omnific Word; your discord end!
Nor stay'd; but, on the wings of cherubim
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
Far into Chaos, and the world unborn;
For Chaos heard his voice: him all his train
Follow'd in bright procession, to behold
Creation and the wonders of his might.
Then stay'd the fervid wheels; and in his hand
He took the golden compasses[p], prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe, and all created things:
One foot he centred, and the other turn'd
Round through the vast profundity obscure;
And said, Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds;
This be thy just circumference, O world!
Thus God the heaven created[q], thus the earth,
Matter unform'd and void: darkness profound
Cover'd the abyss; but on the watery calm
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,

[n] *From the shore*
They view'd.

Here is a most magnificent picture, breathing all the powers of poetry.

[o] *Silence, ye troubled waves.*

How much does the brevity of the command add to the sublimity and majesty of it! It is the same kind of beauty that Longinus admires in the Mosaic history of the creation: it is of the same strain with the same "Omnific Word's" calming the tempest in the Gospel, when he said to the raging sea, "Peace, be still." Mark iv. 39. And how elegantly has he turned the commanding words, *silence* and *peace*, making one the first and the other the last in the sentence, and thereby giving the greater force and emphasis to both!—NEWTON.

[p] *He took the golden compasses.*

See Prov. viii. 27: "When he prepared the heavens I was there: when he set a *compass* upon the face of the deep."—RICHARDSON.

[q] *Thus God the heaven created.*

The reader will naturally remark how exactly Milton copies Moses in his account of the creation. The seventh book of Paradise Lost may be called a larger sort of paraphrase upon the first chapter of Genesis: Milton not only observes the same series and order, but preserves the very words as much as he can.—NEWTON.

Throughout the fluid mass; but downward purged
The black, tartareous, cold, infernal dregs,
Adverse to life: then founded, then conglobed
Like things to like; the rest to several place
Disparted, and between spun out the air;
And earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.
Let there be light, said God[r]; and forthwith light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the deep; and from her native east
To journey through the aery gloom began,
Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle
Sojourned the while. God saw the light was good;
And light from darkness by the hemisphere
Divided: light the day, and darkness night
He named. Thus was the first day even and morn:
Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung
By the celestial quires, when orient light
Exhaling first from darkness they beheld:
Birth-day of heaven and earth: with joy and shout[s]
The hollow universal orb they filled,
And touch'd their golden harps, and hymning praised
God and his works; Creator him they sung,
Both when first evening was, and when first morn.
Again, God said, Let there be firmament[t]
Amid the waters, and let it divide
The waters from the waters: and God made
The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
Transparent, elemental air, diffused
In circuit to the uttermost convex
Of this great round; partition firm and sure,
The waters underneath from those above
Dividing: for as earth, so he the world
Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule
Of Chaos far removed; lest fierce extremes

[r] *Let there be light, said God.*

Gen. i. 3: "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." This is the passage that Longinus particularly admires; and no doubt its sublimity is greatly owing to its conciseness; but our poet enlarges upon it, endeavouring to give some account how light was created the first day, when the sun was not formed till the fourth day. He says that it was sphered in a radiant cloud, and so journeyed round the earth in a cloudy tabernacle; and herein is he justified by the authority of some commentators, though others think this light shone but imperfectly, and did not appear in full lustre till the fourth day.—NEWTON.

[s] *With joy and shout.*

Job xxxviii. 4, 7: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth: when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"—NEWTON.

[t] *Let there be firmament.*

See Gen. i. 6: "Firmament" signifies expansion.—NEWTON.

Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:
And heaven [u] he named the firmament: so even
And morning chorus sung the second day.
The earth was form'd, but in the womb as yet
Of waters, embryon immature involved,
Appear'd not: over all the face of earth
Main ocean flow'd, not idle; but, with warm
Prolific humour softening all her globe,
Fermented the great mother to conceive,
Satiate with genial moisture; when God said,
Be gather'd now, ye waters [v] under heaven,
Into one place, and let dry land appear.
Immediately the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
Into the clouds: their tops ascend the sky:
So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of waters: thither they
Hasted with glad precipitance, uproll'd,
As drops on dust conglobing from the dry:
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
For haste; such flight the great command impress'd
On the swift floods: as armies at the call
Of trumpets (for of armies thou hast heard)
Troop to their standard; so the watery throng,
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,
If steep, with torrent rapture; if through plain,
Soft ebbing: nor withstood them rock or hill;
But they, or under ground, or circuit wide
With serpent errour wandering, found their way,
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore;
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks, where rivers now
Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
The dry land, earth [w]; and the great receptacle
Of congregated waters, he call'd seas:
And saw that it was good; and said, Let the earth
Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed,
And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
Whose seed is in herself upon the earth.

[u] *And heaven.*

So Gen. i. 8. According to the Hebrews there were three heavens. The first is the air, wherein the clouds move, and the birds fly; the second is the starry heaven; and the third is the habitation of the angels and the seat of God's glory. Milton is speaking here of the first heaven, as he mentions the others in other places.—NEWTON.

[v] *Be gather'd now, ye waters.*

See Gen. i. 9; and Psalm civ. 6, et seq.—NEWTON.

[w] *The dry land, earth.*

These are again the words of Genesis formed into verse, i. 10, 11. But when he comes to the descriptive part, he then opens a finer vein of poetry.—NEWTON.

He scarce had said, when the bare earth, till then
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd,
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
Her universal face with pleasant green;
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flower'd [x],
Opening their various colours, and made gay
Her bosom, smelling sweet: and these, scarce blown,
Forth flourish'd thick the clustering vine, forth crept
The swelling gourd, up stood the corny reed
Embattled in her field, and the humble shrub,
And bush with frizzled hair implicit: last
Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemm'd
Their blossoms: with high woods the fields were crown'd,
With tufts the valleys, and each fountain-side;
With borders long the rivers: that earth now
Seem'd like to heaven, a seat where gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt
Her sacred shades: though God had yet not rain'd
Upon the earth, and man to till the ground
None was; but from the earth a dewy mist
Went up, and water'd all the ground, and each
Plant of the field; which, ere it was in the earth,
God made, and every herb, before it grew
On the green stem: God saw that it was good:
So even and morn recorded the third day.
  Again the Almighty spake, Let there be lights
High in the expanse of heaven, to divide
The day from night; and let them be for signs,
For seasons, and for days, and circling years;
And let them be for lights, as I ordain
Their office in the firmament of heaven,
To give light on the earth; and it was so.
And God made two great lights, great for their use
To man, the greater to have rule by day,
The less by night, altern; and made the stars,
And set them in the firmament of heaven
To illuminate the earth, and rule the day
In their vicissitude, and rule the night,
And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
Surveying his great work, that it was good;
For of celestial bodies first the sun,
A mighty sphere, he framed, unlightsome first,
Though of ethereal mould: then form'd the moon
Globose, and every magnitude of stars,
And sow'd with stars the heaven, thick as a field:
Of light by far the greater part he took,

[x] *Sudden flower'd.* See Esdras vi. 44.—TODD.

Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed
In the sun's orb, made porous to receive
And drink the liquid light; firm to retain
Her gather'd beams, great palace now of light.
Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,
And hence the morning planet gilds her horns;
By tincture or reflection they augment
Their small peculiar, though from human sight
So far remote, with diminution seen.
First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,
Regent of day, and all the horizon round
Invested with bright rays, jocund to run
His longitude through heaven's high road; the gray
Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced[y],
Shedding sweet influence[z]; less bright the moon,
But opposite in level'd west was set,
His mirrour, with full face borrowing her light
From him; for other light she needed none
In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
Till night; then in the east her turn she shines,
Revolved on heaven's great axle, and her reign
With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
With thousand thousand stars, that then appear'd
Spangling the hemisphere: then first adorn'd
With their bright luminaries, that set and rose,
Glad evening and glad morn crown'd the fourth day.
  And God said, Let the waters[a] generate
Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul:
And let fowl fly above the earth, with wings
Display'd on the open firmament of heaven.
And God created the great whales, and each
Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously

[y] *The Pleiades, before him danced.*

These are beautiful images, and very much resemble the famous picture of the Morning by Guido, where the sun is represented in his chariot, with Aurora flying before him, shedding flowers, and seven beautiful nymph-like figures, dancing before and about his chariot, which are commonly taken for the Hours, but possibly may be the Pleiades, as they are seven in number, and it is not easy to assign a reason why the Hours should be signified by that number particularly. The picture is on a ceiling at Rome; but there are copies of it in England, and an excellent print by Jac. Frey. The Pleiades are seven stars in the neck of the constellation Taurus, which, rising about the time of the vernal equinox, are called by the Latins "Vergiliæ." Our poet therefore, in saying that the Pleiades danced before the sun at his creation, intimates very plainly that the creation was in the spring, according to the common opinion, Virg. Georg. ii. 338, &c.—NEWTON.

[z] *Shedding sweet influence.*

See Job xxxviii. 31:—"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?"—HUME.

[a] *And God said, Let the waters.*

This, and eleven verses following, are almost word for word from Genesis i. 20–22: the poet afterwards branches out his general account of the fifth day's creation into the several particulars.—NEWTON.

The waters generated by their kinds:
And every bird of wing after his kind;
And saw that it was good, and bless'd them, saying,
Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas,
And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill:
And let the fowl be multiplied on the earth.
Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
Of fish that with their fins, and shining scales,
Glide under the green wave, in sculls[b] that oft
Bank the mid sea: part single, or with mate,
Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through groves
Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,
Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold;
Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food
In jointed armour watch: on smooth the seal
And bended dolphins play: part huge of bulk,
Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
Tempest the ocean: there leviathan,
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
Stretch'd like a promontory, sleeps or swims,
And seems a moving land; and at his gills
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,
Their brood as numerous hatch, from the egg that soon
Bursting with kindly rupture forth disclosed
Their callow young; but feather'd soon and fledge
They summ'd their pens; and, soaring the air sublime,
With clang despised the ground, under a cloud
In prospect; there the eagle and the stork
On cliffs and cedar-tops[c] their eyries build:
Part loosely wing the region; part, more wise,
In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
Intelligent of seasons[d], and set forth
Their aery caravan, high over seas
Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
Easing their flight; so steers the prudent crane
Her annual voyage, borne on winds; the air
Floats as they pass, fann'd with unnumber'd plumes:
From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings
Till even; nor then the solemn nightingale[e]

[b] *Sculls* is undoubtedly *shoals*.

[c] *On cliffs and cedar-tops.*

See Job xxxix. 27, 28.—NEWTON.

[d] *Intelligent of seasons.*

See Jerem. viii. 7.—NEWTON.

[e] *The solemn nightingale.*

Milton's fondness and admiration of the nightingale may be seen, as Newton has

Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays:
Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed
Their downy breast; the swan with arched neck,
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit
The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower
The mid aereal sky: others on ground
Walk'd firm; the crested cock, whose clarion sounds
The silent hours; and the other, whose gay train
Adorns him, colour'd with the florid hue
Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus
With fish replenish'd, and the air with fowl,
Evening and morn solemnized the fifth day.
  The sixth, and of creation last, arose
With evening harps and matin; when God said,
Let the earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
Each in their kind. The earth obey'd, and straight
Opening her fertile womb, teem'd at a birth
Innumerous living creatures, perfect forms,
Limb'd and full grown: out of the ground uprose,
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den;
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walk'd;
The cattle in the fields and meadows green:
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
Pasturing at once, and in broad herds upsprung.
The grassy clods now calved; now half appear'd
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts; then springs, as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane: the ounce,
The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks: the swift stag from under ground
Bore up his branching head: scarce from his mould,
Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved
His vastness: fleeced the flocks and bleating rose,
As plants; ambiguous between sea and land
The river-horse, and scaly crocodile.
At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
Insect or worm: those waved their limber fans
For wings, and smallest lineaments exact
In all the liveries deck'd of summer's pride,
With spots of gold and purple, azure and green:
These as a line their long dimension drew,
Streaking the ground with sinuous trace; not all

remarked, in 'Il Penseroso,' in his first sonnet, and again in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iii. 38; b. iv. 648, 771; b. v. 40; b. viii. 518.—TODD.

Minims of nature; some of serpent kind,
Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved
Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept
The parsimonious emmet, provident
Of future; in small room large heart enclosed;
Pattern of just equality[f], perhaps
Hereafter, joined in her popular tribes
Of commonalty: swarming next appear'd
The female bee, that feeds her husband drone
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
With honey stored: the rest are numberless,
And thou their natures know'st, and gavest them names,
Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown
The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
And hairy mane terrific, though to thee
Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.
  Now heaven in all her glory shone, and roll'd
Her motions, as the great first Mover's hand
First wheel'd their course: earth in her rich attire
Consummate lovely smiled; air, water, earth,
By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walk'd,
Frequent; and of the sixth day yet remain'd:
There wanted yet the master-work, the end
Of all yet done; a creature, who, not prone
And brute as other creatures, but endued
With sanctity of reason, might erect
His stature, and upright with front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing; and from thence
Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends; thither, with heart, and voice, and eyes,
Directed in devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
Of all his works: therefore the Omnipotent
Eternal Father (for where is not he
Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake:
  Let us make now man[g] in our image, man
In our similitude, and let them rule

[f] *Pattern of just equality.*

We see that Milton, upon occasion, discovers his principles of government. He enlarges upon the same thought in his 'Ready Way to establish a free Commonwealth,' Prose W. i. 591. He commends the ants or emmets for living in a republic, as the bees are said to live under a monarchy.—NEWTON.

[g] *Let us make now man.*

The author keeps closely to Scripture in his account of the formation of man, as well as of the other creatures. See Gen. i. 26, 27, 28. There are scarcely any alterations but what were requisite for the verse, or were occasioned by the change of the person, as the angel is speaking to Adam. And what additions are made are plainly of the same original.—NEWTON.

Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.
This said, he form'd thee, Adam, thee, O man,
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
The breath of life; in his own image he
Created thee, in the image of God
Express; and thou becamest a living soul.
Male he created thee; but thy consort
Female, for race; then bless'd mankind, and said,
Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth;
Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,
And every living thing that moves on the earth.
Wherever thus created (for no place
Is yet distinct by name), thence, as thou know'st,
He brought thee into this delicious grove,
This garden, planted with the trees of God,
Delectable both to behold and taste;
And freely all their pleasant fruit for food
Gave thee: all sorts are here that all the earth yields,
Variety without end; but of the tree,
Which, tasted, works knowledge of good and evil,
Thou mayst not; in the day thou eat'st, thou diest:
Death is the penalty imposed; beware,
And govern well thy appetite; lest sin
Surprise thee, and her black attendant, death.
Here finish'd he, and all that he had made
View'd, and behold all was entirely good;
So even and morn accomplish'd the sixth day:
Yet not till the Creator, from his work
Desisting, though unwearied, up return'd,
Up to the heaven of heavens, his high abode;
Thence to behold this new-created world,
The addition of his empire, how it show'd
In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
Answering his great idea. Up he rode,
Follow'd with acclamation, and the sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
Angelic harmonies: the earth, the air
Resounded (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st),
The heavens and all the constellations rung,
The planets in their station listening stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
Open, ye everlasting gates[h]! they sung;

[h] *Open, ye everlasting gates!*

See Psalm xxiv. 7:—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in." This hymn was sung when the ark of God was carried up into the sanctuary on Mount Sion, and is un-

Open, ye heavens! your living doors; let in
The great Creator, from his work return'd
Magnificent, his six days' work, a world;
Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign
To visit oft the dwellings of just men,
Delighted; and with frequent intercourse
Thither will send his winged messengers
On errands of supernal grace. So sung
The glorious train ascending: he through heaven,
That open'd wide her blazing portals, led
To God's eternal house direct the way;
A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,
And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,
Seen in the galaxy, that milky way,
Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou seest
Powder'd with stars. And now on earth the seventh
Evening arose in Eden, for the sun
Was set, and twilight from the east came on,
Forerunning night; when at the holy mount
Of heaven's high seated top, the imperial throne
Of Godhead, fix'd for ever firm and sure,
The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
With his great Father; for he also went

derstood as a prophecy of our Saviour's ascension into heaven; and therefore is fitly applied by our author to the same Divine person's ascending thither, after he had created the world.—NEWTON.

In the seventh book the author appears in a kind of composed and sedate majesty; and though the sentiments do not give so great an emotion as those in the former book, they abound with magnificent ideas. The sixth book, like a troubled ocean, represents greatness in confusion; the seventh affects the imagination like the ocean in a calm; and fills the mind of the reader, without producing in it anything like tumult or agitation.

Longinus, among the rules which he lays down for succeeding in the sublime way of writing, proposes to his reader, that he should imitate the most celebrated authors who have gone before him, and have been engaged in works of the same nature; as, in particular, that, if he writes on a poetical subject, he should consider how Homer would have spoken on such an occasion. By this means one great genius often catches the flame from another; and writes in his spirit without copying servilely after him. There are a thousand shining passages in Virgil, which have been lighted up by Homer.

Milton, though his own natural strength of genius was capable of furnishing out a perfect work, has doubtless very much raised and ennobled his conceptions by such an imitation as that which Longinus has recommended.

In this book, which gives us an account of the six days' work, the poet received but very few assistances from heathen writers, who were strangers to the wonders of creation: but as there are many glorious strokes of poetry upon this subject in Holy Writ, the author has numberless allusions to them through the whole course of this book. The great critic I have before mentioned, though a heathen, has taken notice of the sublime manner in which the lawgiver of the Jews has described the creation in the first book of Genesis; and there are many other passages in Scripture, which rise up to the same majesty, where this subject is touched upon. Milton has shown his judgment very remarkably in making use of such of these as were proper for his poem; and in duly qualifying those high strains of Eastern poetry, which were suited to readers, whose imaginations were set to a higher pitch than those of colder climates.

Adam's speech to the angel, where he desires an account of what passed within

Invisible, yet stay'd (such privilege
Hath Omnipresence), and the work ordain'd,
Authour and End of all things; and, from work
Now resting, bless'd and hallow'd the seventh day,
As resting on that day from all his work.
But not in silence holy kept: the harp
Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe,
And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
Temper'd soft tunings, intermix'd with voice
Choral or unison; of incense clouds,
Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount.
Creation and the six days' acts they sung.
  Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite
Thy power! what thought can measure thee, or tongue
Relate thee? Greater now in thy return
Than from the giant angels: thee that day
Thy thunders magnified; but to create
Is greater than created to destroy.
Who can impair thee, Mighty King, or bound
Thy empire? easily the proud attempt
Of spirits apostate, and their counsels vain,
Thou hast repell'd; while impiously they thought
Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks
To lessen thee, against his purpose serves

the regions of nature before the creation, is very great and solemn. The lines in which he tells that the day is not too far spent for him to enter upon such a subject, are exquisite in their kind, v. 98.

The angel's encouraging our first parents in a modest pursuit after knowledge, and the causes which he assigns for the creation of the world, are very just and beautiful. The Messiah, by whom, as we are told in Scripture, the heavens were made, comes forth in the power of his Father, surrounded with a host of angels, and clothed with such a majesty as becomes his entering upon a work, which, according to our conceptions, appears the utmost exertion of Omnipotence. What a beautiful description has our author raised upon that hint in one of the Prophets! "And behold there came four chariots out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass:"

About his chariot numberless were pour'd, &c.

I have before taken notice of these chariots of God, and of these gates of heaven; and shall here only add, that Homer gives us the same idea of the latter, as opening of themselves; though he afterwards takes off from it by telling us that the Hours first of all removed those prodigious heaps of clouds which lay as a barrier before them.

I do not know anything in the whole poem more sublime than the description which follows; where the Messiah is represented at the head of his angels as looking down into the chaos, calming its confusion, riding into the midst of it, and drawing the first outline of the creation.

The thought of the golden compasses, v. 225, is conceived altogether in Homer's spirit; and is a very noble incident in this wonderful description. Homer, when he speaks of the gods, ascribes to them several arms and instruments, with the same greatness of imagination. Let the reader only peruse the description of Minerva's ægis, or buckler, in the fifth book; with her spear which would overturn whole squadrons, and her helmet that was sufficient to cover an army drawn out of a hundred cities. The golden compasses in the above-mentioned passage appear a very

To manifest the more thy might: his evil
Thou usest, and from thence createst more good.
Witness this new-made world, another heaven
From heaven-gate not far, founded in view
On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea;
Of amplitude almost immense, with stars
Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
Of destined habitation; but thou knowest
Their seasons: among these the seat of men,
Earth with her nether ocean circumfused,
Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy men,
And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced!
Created in his image, there to dwell
And worship him; and in reward to rule
Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,
And multiply a race of worshippers
Holy and just: thrice happy, if they know
Their happiness, and persevere upright!
  So sung they, and the empyrean rung
With halleluiahs: thus was sabbath kept.—
And thy request think now fulfill'd, that ask'd
How first this world and face of things began,
And what before thy memory was done
From the beginning; that posterity,
Inform'd by thee, might know: if else thou seek'st
Aught, not surpassing human measure, say.

natural instrument in the hands of him, whom Plato somewhere calls the Divine Geometrician. As poetry delights in clothing abstracted ideas in allegories and sensible images, we find a magnificent description of the creation, formed after the same manner, in one of the prophets, wherein he describes the Almighty Architect as measuring the waters in the hollow of his hand, meting out the heavens with his span, comprehending the dust of the earth in a measure, weighing the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. Another of them, describing the Supreme Being in this great work of creation, represents him as laying the foundations of the earth, and stretching a line upon it; and in another place, as garnishing the heavens, stretching out the north over the empty place, and hanging the earth upon nothing. This last noble thought Milton has expressed in the following verse:—

And earth self-balanced on her centre hung.

The beauties of description in this book lie so very thick, that it is impossible to enumerate them in these remarks. The poet has employed on them the whole energy of our tongue: the several great scenes of the creation rise up to view, one after another, in such a manner, that the reader seems present at this wonderful work, and to assist among the choirs of angels, who are the spectators of it. How glorious is the conclusion of the first day! v. 252, &c. We have the same elevation of thought in the third day, when the mountains were brought forth, and the deep was made: we have also the rising of the whole vegetable world described in this day's work, which is filled with all the graces that other poets have lavished on their description of the spring, and leads the reader's imagination into a theatre equally surprising and beautiful. The several glories of the heavens make their appearances on the fourth day.

One would wonder how the poet could be so concise in his description of the six days as to comprehend them within the bounds of an episode: and, at the same time, so particular, as to give us a lively idea of them. This is still more remarkable in his account of the fifth and sixth days, in which he has drawn out to our view the whole

animal creation from the reptile to the behemoth. As the lion and the leviathan are two of the noblest productions in the world of living creatures, the reader will find a most exquisite spirit of poetry in the account which our author gives us of them. The sixth day concludes with the formation of man; upon which, the angel takes occasion, as he did after the battle in heaven, to remind Adam of his obedience, which was the principal design of his visit.

The poet afterwards represents the Messiah returning into heaven, and taking a survey of his great work. There is something inexpressibly sublime in this part of the poem, where the author describes the great period of time filled with so many glorious circumstances: when the heavens and earth were finished; when the Messiah ascended up in triumph through the everlasting gates; when he looked down with pleasure upon his new creation; when every part of nature seemed to rejoice in its existence; "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

The accounts which Raphael gives of the battle of angels and creation of the world, have in them those qualifications which the critics judge requisite to an episode: they are nearly related to the principal action, and have a just connexion with the fable. —ADDISON.

This criticism of Addison is so beautiful, so just, and so perfect, that I know not that I can find anything to add to it.

BOOK VIII.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

No praise can be deemed too high for this eighth book of Paradise Lost. Milton speaks as the historian of idealism; never as a rhetorician: he has never any factitious warmth; what he relates he first sees: the richness of his imagination is united with extreme and surprising simplicity: he rejects all adornment. The imagination, which creates a whole series of characters and actions, resulting from each other,—those actions at the same time springing from high minds and high passions,—performs the greatest and rarest work of genius: thus we are filled with the most delightful astonishment, when we read Milton's picture of the creation of Adam and Eve: the beauty, the glow, the enthusiasm, the rapture running through all the senses, and all the veins; the unalloyed grandeur of the man, the celestial grace of the woman; the majesty of his movements, the delicacy of hers; the inconceivable happiness of thoughts and words with which their admiration of each other is expressed; the breaks, the turns of language, the inspired brilliance, and flow of the strains; yet the inimitable chastity and transparence of the whole style;—fill a sensitive reader with an unfeigned wonder and exaltation, which it would be vain to attempt adequately to record.

I need not say, that all the art and skill alone of all the poets of the earth would never have reached those thoughts, though natural and human, yet mixed with intellectual sublimity and exalted passion, which the poet ascribes to Adam and Eve; and in which his beautiful language could only be attained by following those thoughts in a congenial tone. This is the real secret of Milton's great superiority in the true language of poetry: it is miserable, when flat thoughts are covered by sounding or gaudy words.

The mind of him who undertakes to write poetry can only be worked into a due temperament by the force of a warm and pregnant imagination: in that state he need not seek for phrases or ideas: these rise out of the ideal position to which his genius has transported him: they are not the results of slow reflection, or reasoning, or memory. Admit the circumstances, and nature points out the sentiments: but it is the great poet alone who can invent the circumstances; and of all men, Milton could invent them with the most fertility and splendour.

There is another consideration which makes Milton's invention deserving of the most unlimited praise: he was bound down by his awe of religion, and his search after truth and wisdom. When imagination may indulge itself in wanton flights, it may easily blaze by its erratic courses: here the poet had to keep within a prescribed track: he had therefore all his mighty powers at command; he threw his light where it was required.

Again I must say something of the argumentative parts of the poem as applied to this eighth book: these are as profound and excellent as those in the former books. They are not, as Dryden has hinted, flat and unprofitable; but the reverse. They are exalted, closely-argued, nakedly but vigorously expressed, sagacious, moral, instructive, comprehensive, deep in the knowledge of life, consolatory, and fortifying. Whoever supposes them unpoetical, has a narrow and mean conception of poetry; they are never out of place, but result from the leading characters of the poem; and are quite as essential to it, even as its grand, or beautiful, and breathing imagery.

ARGUMENT.

ADAM inquires concerning celestial motions; is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge: Adam assents; and, still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation; his placing in Paradise; his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society; his first meeting and nuptials with Eve; his discourse with the angel thereupon; who, after admonitions repeated, departs.

THE angel ended[a], and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear;
Then, as new waked, thus gratefully replied:
What thanks sufficient, or what recompense
Equal, have I to render thee, divine
Historian, who thus largely hast allay'd
The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsafed
This friendly condescension to relate
Things else by me unsearchable; now heard
With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,
With glory attributed to the high
Creator? Something yet of doubt remains,
Which only thy solution can resolve.
When I behold[b] this goodly frame, this world,
Of heaven and earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes; this earth, a spot, a grain,
An atom, with the firmament compared
And all her number'd stars, that seem to roll
Spaces incomprehensible (for such
Their distance argues, and their swift return
Diurnal), merely to officiate light
Round this opacous earth, this punctual spot,
One day and night; in all their vast survey
Useless besides; reasoning I oft admire,

[a] *The angel ended.*

This eighth book made a part of the seventh book in the first edition.

Milton has here imitated the graceful suspension in the narrative of Ulysses; see the eleventh book of the Odyssey: and Pope, when translating the passage, ingeniously framed his version of Milton's own words:—

He ceased; but left so charming in their ear
His voice, that listening still they seem'd to hear.

[b] *When I behold, &c.*

Milton, after having given so noble an idea of the creation of the new world, takes a proper occasion to show the two great systems, usually called the Ptolemaic and the Copernican: one making the earth, the other the sun, to be the centre; and this he does by introducing Adam proposing very judiciously the difficulties that occur in the first, and which was the system most obvious to him. The reply of the angel touches on the expedients the Ptolemaics invented to solve those difficulties, and to patch up their system; and then intimates that perhaps the sun is the centre; and so opens that system, and withal the noble improvements of the new philosophy; not however determining for one or the other: on the contrary, he exhorts our progenitor to apply his thoughts rather to what more nearly concerns him, and is within his reach.—RICHARDSON.

How nature, wise and frugal, could commit
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
So many nobler bodies to create,
Greater so manifold, to this one use,
For aught appears, and on their orbs impose
Such restless revolution day by day
Repeated; while the sedentary earth,
That better might with far less compass move,
Served by more noble than herself, attains
Her end without least motion, and receives,
As tribute, such a sumless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light;
Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.
So spake our sire, and by his countenance seem'd
Entering on studious thoughts abstruse; which Eve
Perceiving[c], where she sat retired in sight,
With lowliness majestic from her seat,
And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom,
Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,
And, touch'd by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high: such pleasure she reserved,
Adam relating, she sole auditress:
Her husband the relater she preferr'd
Before the angel, and of him to ask
Chose rather; he, she knew, would intermix
Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
With conjugal caresses: from his lip
Not words alone pleased her. O! when meet now
Such pairs in love and mutual honour join'd?
With goddess-like demeanour forth she went,
Not unattended; for on her, as queen,
A pomp of winning Graces[d] waited still,

[c] *Which Eve Perceiving.*

What a lovely picture has the poet here drawn of Eve! As it did not become her to bear a part in the conversation, she modestly sits at a distance, but yet within view: she stays as long as the angel and her husband are discoursing of things which it might concern her and her duty to know; but when they enter upon abstruser points, then she decently retires. This is preserving the decorum of character: and so Cephalus in Plato's 'Republic,' and Scævola in Cicero's treatise 'de Oratore,' stay only as long as it was suitable for persons of their character; and are made to withdraw when the discourse was less proper for them to hear. Eve's withdrawing is juster and more beautiful than these instances. She rises to go forth with lowliness, but yet with majesty and grace. What modesty and what dignity is here!—NEWTON.

[d] *A pomp of winning Graces.*

Gray has imitated this in the opening of his poem, 'The Progress of Poesy.' Gray may be perpetually tracked in his imitations of Milton's expressions.

And from about her shot darts of desire
Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.
And Raphael now, to Adam's doubt proposed,
Benevolent and facile thus replied:
To ask or search, I blame thee not; for heaven
Is as the book of God before thee set,
Wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn
His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years:
This to attain[*], whether heaven move or earth,
Imports not, if thou reckon right: the rest
From man or angel the great Architect
Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
His secrets to be scann'd by them who ought
Rather admire; or if they list to try
Conjecture, he his fabric of the heavens
Hath left to their disputes; perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter, when they come to model heaven
And calculate the stars: how they will wield
The mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive,
To save appearances; how gird the sphere
With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,
Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb:
Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest
That bodies bright and greater should not serve
The less not bright; nor heaven such journeys run,
Earth sitting still, when she alone receives
The benefit. Consider first, that great
Or bright infers not excellence: the earth,
Though, in comparison of heaven, so small,
Nor glistering, may of solid good contain
More plenty than the sun that barren shines;
Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
But in the fruitful earth; there first received,
His beams, unactive else, their vigour find.
Yet not to earth are those bright luminaries
Officious; but to thee, earth's habitant.
And for the heaven's wide circuit, let it speak
The Maker's high magnificence; who built
So spacious, and his line stretch'd out so far,
That man may know he dwells not in his own[f];

[*] *This to attain.*

It imports not, it matters not, whether heaven move or earth, whether the Ptolemaic or Copernican system be true. This knowledge we may still attain;—the rest, other more curious points of inquiry concerning the heavenly bodies, God hath done wisely to conceal.—NEWTON.

See Psalm cxxxix. 6:—"Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; I cannot attain unto it."—DUNSTER.

[f] *That man may know he dwells not in his own.*

A fine reflection, and confirmed by the authority of the greatest philosophers, who

An edifice too large for him to fill;
Lodged in a small partition; and the rest
Ordain'd for uses to his Lord best known.
The swiftness of those circles attribute,
Though numberless, to his omnipotence,
That to corporeal substances could add
Speed almost spiritual: me thou think'st not slow,
Who since the morning hour set out from heaven
Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived
In Eden; distance inexpressible
By numbers that have name. But this I urge,
Admitting motion in the heavens, to show
Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved;
Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
To thee, who hast thy dwelling here on earth.
God, to remove his ways from human sense,
Placed heaven from earth so far, that earthly sight,
If it presume, might err in things too high,
And no advantage gain. What if the sun
Be centre to the world; and other stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds;
Their wandering course, now high, now low, then hid,
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
In six thou seest [g]; and what if seventh to these
The planet earth, so steadfast though she seem,
Insensibly three different motions move?
Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe
Moved contrary with thwart obliquities;
Or save the sun his labour, and that swift
Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
Of day and night; which needs not thy belief,
If earth, industrious of herself, fetch day
Travelling east, and with her part averse
From the sun's beam meet night, her other part
Still luminous by his ray. What if that light,
Sent from her through the wide transpicuous air,
To the terrestrial moon be as a star,
Enlightening her by day, as she by night
This earth? reciprocal, if land be there,
Fields and inhabitants: her spots thou seest
As clouds [h], and clouds may rain, and rain produce

seem to attribute the first notions of religion in man to his observing the grandeur of the universe. See Cicero, Tusc. Disp. lib. i. sect. 28, and De Nat. Deor. lib. ii. sect. 6. —STILLINGFLEET.

[g] *In six thou seest.*

In the moon, and the "five other wandering fires," as they are called, b. v. 177. —NEWTON.

[h] *Her spots thou seest*
As clouds.

It seems by this, and by another passage, b. v. 419, as if our author thought that

Fruits in her soften'd soil, for some to eat
Allotted there; and other suns perhaps,
With their attendant moons, thou wilt descry,
Communicating male and female light;
Which two great sexes animate the world,
Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live:
For such vast room in nature unpossess'd
By living soul, desert and desolate,
Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
Each orb a glimpse of light, convey'd so far
Down to this habitable, which returns
Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
But whether thus these things, or whether not;
Whether the sun predominant in heaven
Rise on the earth; or earth rise on the sun;
He from the east his flaming road begin,
Or she from west her silent course advance,
With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On her soft axle; while she paces even,
And bears thee soft with the smooth air along;
Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid;
Leave them to God above; him serve and fear.
Of other creatures, as him pleases best,
Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou
In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
And thy fair Eve; heaven is for thee too high
To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
Think only what concerns thee, and thy being;
Dream not of other worlds; what creatures there
Live, in what state, condition, or degree:
Contented that thus far hath been reveal'd,
Not of earth only, but of highest heaven.
To whom thus Adam, clear'd of doubt, replied:
How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure
Intelligence of heaven, angel serene!
And, freed from intricacies, taught to live
The easiest way; nor with perplexing thoughts
To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
And not molest us; unless we ourselves
Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain.
But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
Uncheck'd, and of her roving is no end;
Till warn'd, or by experience taught she learn,
That not to know at large of things remote

the spots in the moon were clouds and vapours: but the most probable opinion is, that they are her seas and waters, which reflect only part of the sun's rays, and absorb the rest. They cannot possibly be clouds and vapours, because they are observed to be fixed and permanent.—NEWTON.

From use, obscure and subtle; but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom[i]: what is more, is fume,
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence;
And renders us, in things that most concern,
Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise
Of something not unseasonable to ask,
By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deign'd.
Thee I have heard relating what was done
Ere my remembrance; now, hear me relate
My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard:
And day is not yet spent; till then thou seest
How subtly to detain thee I devise;
Inviting thee to hear while I relate;
Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply;
For, while I sit with thee, I seem in heaven;
And sweeter thy discourse[j]; is to my ear
Than fruits of palm-tree, pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labour at the hour
Of sweet repast; they satiate and soon fill,
Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine
Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety.
  To whom thus Raphael answer'd heavenly meek:
Nor are thy lips ungraceful, sire of men,
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also pour'd
Inward and outward both, his image fair:
Speaking or mute, all comeliness and grace
Attends thee; and each word, each motion forms:
Nor less think we in heaven of thee on earth

[i] *Is the prime wisdom.*

An excellent piece of satire this, and a fine reproof of those men who have all sense but common sense, and whose folly is truly represented in the story of the philosopher, who, while he was gazing at the stars, fell into a ditch. Our author, in these lines, as Mr. Thyer imagines, might probably have in his eye the character of Socrates, who first attempted to divert his countrymen from their airy and chimerical notions about the origin of things, and turn their attention to that "prime wisdom," the consideration of moral duties, and their conduct in social life.—NEWTON.

See Johnson's observations to the same effect, and as to the proper objects of study, in his 'Life of Milton,' speaking of the poet's plans of education.

[j] *And sweeter thy discourse.*

The poet had here probably in mind that passage in Virgil, Ecl. v. 45:—

> Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,
> Quale sopor fessis in gramine; quale per æstum
> Dulcis aquæ saliente sitim restinguere rivo.

But the fine turn in the last three lines of Milton is entirely his own, and gives an exquisite beauty to this passage above Virgil's. See 'An Essay upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients,' p. 37.—NEWTON.

Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire
Gladly into the ways of God with man:
For God, we see, hath honour'd thee, and set
On man his equal love: say therefore on;
For I that day was absent[k], as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,
Far on excursion toward the gates of hell;
Squared in full legion (such command we had),
To see that none thence issued[l] forth a spy,
Or enemy, while God was in his work;
Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold,
Destruction with creation might have mix'd.
Not that they durst without his leave attempt:
But us he sends upon his high behests
For state, as Sovran King; and to inure
Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut
The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong;
But long ere our approaching heard within
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song;
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.
Glad we return'd up to the coasts of light
Ere sabbath evening: so we had in charge.
But thy relation now; for I attend,
Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine.
So spake the godlike power, and thus our sire:
For man to tell how human life began
Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?
Desire with thee still longer to converse
Induced me. As new waked from soundest sleep,
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,
In balmy sweat; which with his beams the sun
Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
Straight toward heaven my wondering eyes I turn'd,
And gazed awhile the ample sky; till, raised
By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
Stood on my feet: about me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these
Creatures that lived and moved, and walk'd or flew;

[k] *For I that day was absent.*

The sixth day of the creation: of all the rest, of which he has spoken, he might have been an eye-witness.—RICHARDSON.

[l] *That none thence issued.*

As man was to be the principal work of God in the lower world, and (according to Milton's hypothesis) a creature to supply the loss of the fallen angels, so particular care is taken at his creation. The angels, on that day, keep watch and guard at the gates of hell, that none may issue forth to interrupt the sacred work: at the same time, that this was a very good reason for the angel's absence, it is likewise doing honour to the man with whom he was conversing.—NEWTON.

Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled;
With fragrance and with joy [m] my heart o'erflow'd.
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
Survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
With supple joints, as lively vigour led:
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
Knew not: to speak I tried, and forthwith spake;
My tongue obey'd, and readily could name
Whate'er I saw. Thou sun, said I, fair light,
And thou enlighten'd earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye hills, and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,
Tell, if ye saw, how I came thus, how here?
Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power pre-eminent:
Tell me, how may I know him, how adore;
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know?
While thus I call'd, and stray'd I knew not whither,
From where I first drew air, and first beheld
This happy light; when answer none return'd,
On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
Pensive I sat me down: there gentle sleep
First found me, and with soft oppression seized
My drowsed sense; untroubled, though I thought
I then was passing to my former state
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:
When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
Whose inward apparition gently moved
My fancy to believe I yet had being,
And lived: one came, methought, of shape divine,
And said, Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,
First man, of men innumerable ordain'd
First father! call'd by thee, I come thy guide
To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.

[m] *All things smiled;*
With fragrance and with joy.

By *fragrance*, Milton has endeavoured to give an idea of that exquisite and delicious joy of heart Homer so often expresses by *ἰαίνεται*, a word that signifies the fragrance that flowers emit after a shower of dew. Milton has used a like expression in his treatise "Of Reformation," p. 2, ed. 1738. "Methinks a sovran and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears, and the sweet odour of the returning Gospel imbathe his soul with the *fragrance* of heaven."—RICHARDSON.

Mr. Richardson might have farther observed, that Milton himself had expressed the same thought with more beauty, if possible, in b. iv. 153, where, speaking of Satan's approach to the garden of Paradise, he says,

And of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair.—THYER.

So saying, by the hand [n] he took me raised,
And over fields and waters, as in air
Smooth sliding without step, last led me up
A woody mountain; whose high top was plain,
A circuit wide enclosed, with goodliest trees
Planted, with walks and bowers; that what I saw
Of earth before scarce pleasant seem'd. Each tree,
Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye
Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite
To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found
Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
Had lively shadow'd: here had new begun
My wandering, had not He, who was my guide
Up hither, from among the trees appear'd,
Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
In adoration at his feet I fell
Submiss: he rear'd me, and, Whom thou sought'st I am,
Said mildly; Authour of all this thou seest
Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
This Paradise I give thee; count it thine
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat:
Of every tree that in the garden grows
Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:
But of the tree [o], whose operation brings
Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
Amid the garden, by the tree of life,
Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,
And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
Transgress'd, inevitably thou shalt die [p],
From that day mortal; and this happy state
Shalt lose, expell'd from hence into a world

[n] *So saying, by the hand.*

It is said that "the Lord took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it," Gen. ii. 15. Some commentators say, that man was not formed in Paradise, but was placed there after he was formed, to show that he had no title to it by nature, but by grace; and Milton poetically supposes that he was carried thither sleeping, and was first made to see that happy place in vision. The poet had perhaps in mind that passage of Virgil, where Venus lays young Ascanius asleep, and removes him from Carthage to the Idalian fields, Æn. i. 691, &c.: or if he had Scripture still in view, he had authority for such a removal of a person, Acts viii. 39, when "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and he was found at Azotus."—NEWTON.

[o] *But of the tree.*

This being the great hinge on which the whole poem turns, Milton has marked it strongly: "But of the tree;"—"remember what I warn thee." He dwells, expatiates upon it, from v. 323 to v. 336, repeating, enforcing, fixing every word: it is all nerve and energy.—RICHARDSON.

[p] *Inevitably thou shalt die.*

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," as in Gen. ii. 17, that is, from that day thou shalt become mortal, as the poet immediately afterwards explains it.—NEWTON.

Of woe and sorrow. Sternly he pronounced
The rigid interdiction, which resounds
Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice
Not to incur: but soon his clear aspect
Return'd, and gracious purpose thus renew'd:
Not only these fair bounds, but all the earth
To thee and to thy race I give; as lords
Possess it, and all things that therein live,
Or live in sea or air; beast, fish, and fowl.
In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold
After their kinds; I bring them to receive
From thee their names, and pay thee fealty
With low subjection; understand the same
Of fish within their watery residence,
Not hither summon'd, since they cannot change
Their element, to draw the thinner air.
As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
Approaching two and two; these cowering low
With blandishment; each bird stoop'd on his wing.
I named them as they pass'd, and understood
Their nature; with such knowledge God endued
My sudden apprehension; but in these
I found not[q] what methought I wanted still;
And to the heavenly vision thus presumed:
  O, by what name, for thou above all these,
Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
Surpassest far my naming; how may I
Adore thee, Authour of this universe,
And all this good to man? for whose well-being
So amply, and with hands so liberal,
Thou hast provided all things: but with me
I see not who partakes. In solitude
What happiness? who can enjoy alone;
Or, all-enjoying, what contentment find?
Thus I presumptuous; and the Vision bright,
As with a smile more brighten'd, thus replied:
  What call'st thou solitude? Is not the earth
With various living creatures, and the air
Replenish'd, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee? Know'st thou not

[q] *But in these*
I found not.

The account given by Moses is very short here, as in all the rest. Gen. ii. 19, 20. "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." And from this short account, our author has raised, what a noble episode! and what a divine dialogue from the latter part only!—NEWTON.

Their language and their ways[r]? They also know,
And reason not contemptibly: with these
Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.
So spake the Universal Lord, and seem'd
So ordering: I, with leave of speech implored,
And humble deprecation, thus replied:
  Let not my words offend thee, heavenly Power;
My Maker, be propitious while I speak.
Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
And these inferiour far beneath me set?
Among unequals what society
Can sort, what harmony, or true delight?
Which must be mutual, in proportion due
Given and received; but, in disparity[s],
The one intense, the other still remiss,
Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
Tedious alike: of fellowship I speak,
Such as I seek, fit to participate
All rational delight; wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort: they rejoice
Each with their kind, lion with lioness;
So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:
Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;
Worse then can man with beast, and least of all.
  Whereto the Almighty answer'd, not displeased:
A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
Of thy associates, Adam! and wilt taste
No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
What think'st thou then of me, and this my state?
Seem I to thee sufficiently possess'd
Of happiness, or not? who am alone
From all eternity; for none I know
Second to me or like, equal much less.
How have I then with whom to hold converse,
Save with the creatures which I made, and those

[r] *Know'st thou not*
Their language and their ways?

That brutes have a kind of language among themselves is evident and undeniable. There is a treatise in French of the language of brutes; and our author supposes that Adam understood this language, and was of knowledge superior to any of his descendants, and besides was assisted by inspiration, "with such knowledge God endued his sudden apprehension." He is said by the school divines to have exceeded Solomon himself in knowledge.—NEWTON.

[s] *But, in disparity.*

But in inequality, such as is between brute and rational; "the one intense," man, high, wound up, and strained to nobler understanding, and of more lofty faculty; "the other still remiss," the animal, let down and slacker, grovelling in more low and mean perceptions; can never suit together. A musical metaphor, from strings, of which the stretched and highest give a smart and sharp sound, the slack a flat and heavy one.—HUME.

To me inferiour, infinite descents
Beneath what other creatures are to thee?
He ceased; I lowly answer'd: To attain
The highth and depth of thy eternal ways[t]
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things!
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
Is no deficience found: not so is man,
But in degree; the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help,
Or solace his defects. No need that thou
Shouldst propagate, already Infinite;
And through all numbers absolute, though One:
But man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied,
In unity defective; which requires
Collateral love, and dearest amity.
Thou in thy secresy, although alone,
Best with thyself accompanied, seek'st not
Social communication; yet, so pleased,
Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt
Of union or communion, deified:
I, by conversing, cannot these erect
From prone; nor in their ways complacence find.
Thus I embolden'd spake, and freedom used
Permissive, and acceptance found: which gain'd
This answer from the gracious Voice Divine:
Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased;
And find thee knowing, not of beasts alone,
Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself;
Expressing well the spirit within thee free[u],
My image, not imparted to the brute;
Whose fellowship therefore, unmeet for thee,
Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike:
And be so minded still: I, ere thou spakest[v],

[t] *Thy eternal ways.*

See Rom. xi. 33:—"O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"—HUME.

[u] *Spirit within thee free.*

Milton is, upon all occasions, a strenuous advocate for the freedom of the human mind, against the narrow and rigid notions of the Calvinists of that age; and here, in the same spirit, supposes the very image of God, in which man was made, to consist in this liberty. The sentiment is very grand; and this sense of the words is, in my opinion, full as probable as any of those many which the commentators have put upon them; inasmuch as no property of the soul of man distinguishes him better from the brutes, or assimilates him more to his Creator. This notion, though uncommon, is not peculiar to Milton; for I find Clarius, in his remark upon this passage of Scripture, referring to St. Basil the great, for the same interpretation. See Clarius amongst the *Critici Sacri*.—THYER.

[v] *I, ere thou spakest.*

As we read in Gen. ii. 18. And then, ver. 19 and 20, God brings the beasts and birds

Knew it not good for man to be alone;
And no such company as then thou saw'st
Intended thee; for trial only brought,
To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet:
What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.
He ended, or I heard no more; for now
My earthly by his heavenly overpower'd [w],
Which it had long stood under, strain'd to the highth
In that celestial colloquy sublime,
As with an object that excels the sense,
Dazzled and spent, sunk down; and sought repair
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, call'd
By nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.
Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell
Of fancy [x], my internal sight; by which,
Abstract as in a trance [y], methought I saw,
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape
Still glorious before whom awake I stood;
Who stooping, open'd my left side, and took
From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,
But suddenly with flesh fill'd up and heal'd:
The rib he form'd and fashion'd with his hands;

before Adam, and Adam gives them names; "but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him;" as if Adam had now discovered it himself likewise: and from this little hint our author has raised this dialogue between Adam and his Maker. And then follows, both in Moses and in Milton, the account of the formation of Eve, and institution of marriage.—NEWTON.

[w] *By his heavenly overpower'd.*

The Scripture says only, that "the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam," Gen. ii. 21; and our author endeavours to give some account how it was effected. Adam was overpowered by conversing with so superior a Being, his faculties having been all strained and exerted to the highth; and now he sunk down quite dazzled and spent, and sought repair of sleep, which instantly fell on him, and closed his eyes. "Mine eyes he closed," says he again, turning the words, and making Sleep a person, as the ancient poets often do.—NEWTON.

[x] *Open left the cell*
Of fancy.

Balaam, before he prophesies the happiness of Israel, thus describes himself in the vision which communicated to him the divine word:—"The man, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open," Numb. xxiv. 4. On the latter part of which verse the gloss of the commentators Vatablus and Fagius is,—"dormitans, et tamen habens oculos mentis apertos." This frequent recollection in Milton, not only of every applicable Scripture passage, but of every material comment on them, shows the wonderful extent of his reading and power of his memory.—DUNSTER.

[y] *Abstract as in a trance.*

"The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam," Gen. ii. 21. The word that we translate a *deep sleep*, the Greek interpreters render by *trance* or *ecstasy*, in which the person is abstract, is withdrawn as it were from himself, and still sees things, though his senses are all locked up. So that Adam sees his wife, as he did Paradise, first in vision.—NEWTON.

Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Man-like, but different sex; so lovely fair,
That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now
Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd
And in her looks; which from that time infused
Sweetness into my heart unfelt before,
And into all things from her air inspired
The spirit of love and amorous delight.
She disappear'd, and left me dark[a]: I waked
To find her, or for ever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:
When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
With what all earth or heaven could bestow
To make her amiable; on she came,
Led by her heavenly Maker[a], though unseen,
And guided by his voice; nor uninform'd
Of nuptial sanctity, and marriage rites:
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.
I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud:
  This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
Of all thy gifts! nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone[b], flesh of my flesh, myself
Before me: Woman is her name; of man
Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.
  She heard me thus; and though divinely brought,
Yet innocence, and virgin modesty,
Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but, retired,
The more desirable; or, to say all,

[a] *She disappear'd, and left me dark.*

She that was my light vanished, and left me dark and comfortless: for light is in almost all languages a metaphor for joy and comfort, and darkness for the contrary. As Dr. Pearce observes, it is something of the same way of thinking that Milton uses in his Sonnet on his deceased wife: after having described her as appearing to him, he says,—

She fled, and day brought back my night.—NEWTON.

[a] *Led by her heavenly Maker.*

For the Scripture says,—"The Lord God brought her unto the man," Gen. ii. 22. And Milton, still alluding to this text, says afterwards that she was "divinely brought," v. 500.—NEWTON.

[b] *Bone of my bone.*

That Adam, waking from his deep sleep, should, in words so express and prophetic, own and claim his companion, gave rise to that opinion, that he was not only asleep, but entranced too; by which he saw all that was done to him, and understood the mystery of it, God informing his understanding in his ecstacy.—HUME.

Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,
Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turn'd:
I follow'd her; she what was honour knew,
And with obsequious majesty approved [c]
My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower
I led her blushing like the morn: all heaven,
And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selectest influence; the earth
Gave sign of gratulation [d], and each hill;
Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening-star
On his hill top [e], to light the bridal lamp.
Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
My story to the sum of earthly bliss,
Which I enjoy; and must confess to find
In all things else delight indeed, but such
As, used or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement desire; these delicacies
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,
Walks, and the melody of birds: but here

[c] *With obsequious majesty approved.*

How exactly does Milton preserve the same character of Eve in all places where he speaks of her! This "obsequious majesty" is the very same with the "coy submission, modest pride," in the fourth book; and both not unlike what Spenser has in his "Epithalamion:"—

Behold how goodly my faire love does ly,
In proud humility.—THYER.

[d] *The earth*
Gave sign of gratulation.

This is a copy from Homer, Il. xiv. 347:—

Τοῖσι δ' ὑπὸ Χθὼν δῖα φύεν νεοθηλέα ποίην, κ. τ. λ.

but Milton has greatly improved this, as he improves everything, in the imitation. In all his copies of the beautiful passages of other authors he studiously varies and disguises them, the better to give himself the air of an original, and to make, by his additions and improvements, what he borrowed the more fairly his own; the only regular way of acquiring a property in thoughts taken from other writers, if we may believe Horace, whose laws in poetry are of undoubted authority, "De Art Poet." v. 131, &c. Milton, indeed, in what he borrows from Scripture, observes the contrary rule; and generally adheres minutely, or rather religiously, to the very words, as much as possible, of the original.—NEWTON.

[e] *The evening star*
On his hill top.

The evening star is said to light the bridal lamp, as it was the signal among the ancients to light their lamps and torches, in order to conduct the bride home to the bridegroom. Catullus:—"Vesper adest, juvenes consurgite," &c. "On his hill top;" for when this star appeared eastward in the morning, it was said to rise on Mount Ida, Virg. Æn. ii. 801: when it appeared westward in the evening, it was said to be seen on Mount Œta, Virg. Ecl. viii. 30. Milton therefore writes in classical language: he does not mention any mountain by name, but says only "the evening star on his hill top," as appearing above the hills.—NEWTON.

Far otherwise, transported I behold,
Transported touch; here passion first I felt,
Commotion strange! in all enjoyments else
Superior and unmoved; here only weak
Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.
Or nature fail'd in me, and left some part
Not proof enough such object to sustain;
Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
More than enough; at least on her bestow'd
Too much of ornament, in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understand in the prime end
Of nature her the inferiour, in the mind
And inward faculties, which most excel:
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both, and less expressing
The character of that dominion given
O'er other creatures: yet, when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best:
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows;
Authority and reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
Greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic placed.
To whom the angel with contracted brow:
Accuse not nature; she hath done her part,
Do thou but thine; and be not diffident
Of wisdom; she deserts thee not, if thou
Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
By attributing overmuch to things
Less excellent, as thou thyself perceivest.
For, what admirest thou, what transports thee so?
An outside; fair, no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing[f], thy honouring, and thy love;
Not thy subjection: weigh with her thyself;
Then value: oft-times nothing profits more

[f] *And worthy well*
Thy cherishing, &c.

He makes use of these three words, agreeably to Scripture:—"So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it," Ephes. v. 28, 29. "Giving honour unto the wife," 1 Pet. iii. 7.—NEWTON.

Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well managed; of that skill the more thou know'st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
And to realities yield all her shows:
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
So awful, that with honour thou mayst love
Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
But if the sense of touch, whereby mankind
Is propagated, seem such dear delight
Beyond all other; think the same vouchsafed
To cattle and each beast; which would not be
To them made common and divulged, if aught
Therein enjoy'd were worthy to subdue
The soul of man, or passion in him move.
What higher in her society thou find'st
Attractive, human, rational, love still;
In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
Wherein true love consists not: love refines [g]
The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat
In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou mayst ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause,
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.
  To whom thus, half abash'd, Adam replied;
Neither her outside form'd so fair, nor aught
In procreation common to all kinds
(Though higher of the genial bed by far,
And with mysterious reverence I deem),
So much delights me, as those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies, that daily flow
From all her words and actions, mix'd with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of mind [h], or in us both one soul;
Harmony to behold in wedded pair
More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
Yet these subject not: I to thee disclose
What inward thence I feel, not therefore foil'd;
Who meet with various objects, from the sense
Variously representing; yet, still free,

[g] *Love refines.*

Milton, in his "Apology for Smectymnuus," speaks thus:—"Thus, from the laureat-fraternity of poets, riper years and the ceaseless round of study and reading led me to the shady spaces of philosophy; but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato, and his equal Xenophon: where if I should tell ye what I learned of chastity and love, I mean that which is truly so," &c.—THYER.

[h] *Union of mind.*

So in his "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," b. i. c. 2:—"And indeed it is a greater blessing from God, more worthy so excellent a creature as man is, and a higher end to honour and sanctifie the league of marriage, when as the solace and satisfaction of the mind is regarded and provided for before the sensitive pleasing of the body."—TODD.

Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
To love, thou blamest me not; for love, thou sayst,
Leads up to heaven, is both the way and guide;
Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask:
Love not the heavenly spirits, and how their love
Express they? by looks only? or do they mix
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?
  To whom the angel, with a smile that glow'd
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,
Answer'd: Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
Us happy; and without love no happiness.
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
(And pure thou wert created), we enjoy
In eminence; and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars:
Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace
Total they mix, union of pure with pure[i]
Desiring; nor restrain'd conveyance need,
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
But I can now no more[j]; the parting sun,
Beyond the earth's green cape and verdant isles
Hesperian, sets; my signal to depart.
Be strong, live happy, and love! but, first of all,
Him, whom to love is to obey[k], and keep

[i] *Union of pure with pure.*

Raphael had said that spirits "mix total;" that is one circumstance in which they differ from men; viz., they are so unrestrained, that they need no conveyance; that is, need not move to meet one another, as our flesh does to meet with other flesh, and one soul with another soul, *mediante corpore.*—PEARCE.

[j] *But I can now no more.*

The conversation had now become of such a nature, that it was proper to put an end to it. And now the "parting sun beyond the earth's green cape," beyond Cape de Verd, the most western point of Africa; "and verdant isles," the islands of Cape de Verd; "Hesperian sets," sets westward, from Hesperus the evening star appearing there; "my signal to depart," for he was only to stay till the evening. See b. v. 376. And he very properly closes his discourse with those moral instructions, which should make the most lasting impression on the mind of Adam, and to deliver which was the principal end and design of the angel's coming.—NEWTON.

[k] *Him, whom to love is to obey.*

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments," 1 John, v. 3. His "great command" every body will understand to be the trial of Adam's obedience.—NEWTON.

The eighth book opens with a beautiful description of the impression which the discourse of the archangel Raphael made on our first parents. Adam afterwards, by a very natural curiosity, inquires concerning the motions of those celestial bodies which make the most glorious appearance among the six days' works. The poet here, with a great deal of art, represents Eve as withdrawing from this part of their conversation, to amusements much more suitable to her sex: he well knew that the episode in this book, which is filled with Adam's account of his passion and esteem for Eve, would have been improper for her hearing; and has therefore devised very just and beautiful reasons for her retiring.

The angel's returning a doubtful answer to Adam's inquiries was not only proper for the moral reason which the poet assigns; but because it would have been highly absurd to have given the sanction of an archangel to any particular system of philosophy:

His great command: take heed, lest passion sway
Thy judgment to do aught, which else free will
Would not admit: thine, and of all thy sons,
The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!
I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
And all the blest: stand fast; to stand or fall
Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.
Perfect within, no outward aid require:
And all temptation to transgress repel.
So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus
Follow'd with benediction:—Since to part,
Go, heavenly guest, ethereal messenger,
Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore!
Gentle to me and affable hath been
Thy condescension, and shall be honour'd ever
With grateful memory: thou to mankind
Be good and friendly still, and oft return!
So parted they; the angel up to heaven
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

the chief points in the Ptolemaic and Copernican hypotheses are described with great conciseness and perspicuity, and at the same time dressed in very pleasing and poetical images.

Adam, to detain the angel, enters afterwards upon his own history, and relates to him the circumstances in which he found himself upon his creation, as also his conversation with his Maker, and his first meeting with Eve. There is no part of the poem more apt to raise the attention of the reader than this discourse of our great ancestor; as nothing can be more surprising and delightful to us than to hear the sentiments that arose in the first man, while he was yet new and fresh from the hands of his Creator. The poet has interwoven everything which is delivered upon this subject in Holy Writ with so many beautiful imaginations of his own, that nothing can be conceived more just and natural than this whole episode: as our author knew this subject could not but be agreeable to his reader, he would not throw it into the relation of the six days' works, but reserved it for a distinct episode, that he might have an opportunity of expatiating upon it more at large. Before I enter on this part of the poem, I cannot but take notice of two shining passages in the dialogue between Adam and the angel: the first is that wherein our ancestor gives an account of the pleasure he took in conversing with him, which contains a very noble moral, v. 210, &c.: the other I shall mention is that in which the angel gives a reason why he should be glad to hear the story Adam was about to relate, v. 229, &c. There is no question but our poet drew the image in what follows from that of Virgil's sixth book, where Æneas and the Sibyl stand before the adamantine gates, which are described as shut upon the place of torments; and listen to the groans, the clank of chains, and the noise of iron whips, that were heard in those regions of pain and sorrow.

Adam then proceeds to give an account of his condition and sentiments immediately after his creation. How agreeably does he represent the posture in which he found himself, the delightful landscape that surrounded him, and the gladness of heart which grew up in him on that occasion! He is afterwards described as surprised at his own existence, and taking a survey of himself, and of all the works of nature: he also is represented as discovering by the light of reason, that he, and everything about him, must have been the effect of some Being infinitely good and powerful; and that this Being had a right to his worship and adoration. His first address to the sun, and to those parts of the creation which made the most distinguished figure, is very natural and amusing to the imagination: his next sentiment, when upon his first going to sleep he fancies himself losing his existence, and falling away into nothing, can never be sufficiently admired: his dream, in which he still preserves the consciousness of his

existence, and his removal into the garden which was prepared for his reception, are also circumstances finely imagined, and grounded upon what is delivered in sacred story.

These, and the like wonderful incidents in this part of the work, have in them all the beauties of novelty, at the same time that they have all the graces of nature; they are such as none but a great genius could have thought of; though, upon the perusal of them, they seem to rise of themselves from the subject of which he treats. In a word, though they are natural they are not obvious; which is the true character of all fine writing.

The impression which the introduction of the Tree of Life left in the mind of our first parent is described with great strength and judgment; as the image of the several beasts and birds passing in review before him is very beautiful and lively.

Adam, in the next place, describes a conference which he held with his Maker upon the subject of solitude. The poet here represents the Supreme Being as making an essay of his own work, and putting to the trial that reasoning faculty with which he had endued his creature. Adam urges, in this divine colloquy, the impossibility of his being happy, though he was the inhabitant of Paradise, and lord of the whole creation, without the conversation and society of some rational creature, who should partake those blessings with him: this dialogue, which is supported chiefly by the beauty of the thoughts, without other poetical ornaments, is as fine a part as any in the whole poem: the more the reader examines the justness and delicacy of the sentiments, the more he will find himself pleased with it. The poet has wonderfully preserved the character of majesty and condescension in the Creator, and at the same time that of humility and adoration in the creature, in v. 367, &c.

Adam then proceeds to give an account of his second sleep, and of the dream in which he beheld the formation of Eve: the new passion that was awakened in him at the sight of her is touched very finely:—

> Under his forming hands a creature grew,
> Man-like, but different sex; so lovely fair,
> That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now
> Mean, or in her summ'd up, &c.

Adam's distress upon losing sight of this beautiful phantom, with his exclamations of joy and gratitude at the discovery of a real creature who resembled the apparition which had been presented to him in his dream; the approaches he makes to her, and his manner of courtship; are all laid together in a most exquisite propriety of sentiments. Though this part of the poem is worked up with great warmth and spirit, the love which he describes in it is in every way suitable to a state of innocence. If the reader compares the description which Adam here gives of his leading Eve to the nuptial bower, with that which Mr. Dryden has made on the same occasion in a scene of his "Fall of Man," he will be sensible of the great care which Milton took to avoid all thoughts on so delicate a subject that might be offensive to religion or good manners. The sentiments are chaste, but not cold; and convey to the mind ideas of the most transporting passion and of the greatest purity. What a noble mixture of rapture and innocence has the author joined together in the reflection which Adam makes on the pleasure of love, compared to those of sense!

These sentiments of love in our first parent give the angel such an insight into human nature, that he seems apprehensive of the evils which might befall the species in general from the excess of this passion; he therefore fortifies him against it by timely admonitions, which very artfully prepare the mind of the reader for the occurrences of the next book; where the weakness of which Adam here gives such distant discoveries, brings about that fatal event which is the subject of the poem: his discourse, which follows the gentle rebuke he received from the angel, shows that his love, however violent it might appear, was still founded in reason, and consequently not improper for Paradise.

Adam's speech at parting from the angel has in it a deference and gratitude agreeable to an inferior nature; and at the same time a certain dignity and greatness suitable to the father of mankind in his state of innocence.—ADDISON.

BOOK IX.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The most extraordinary part of this story is Eve's perverse resolve to separate herself from Adam in her morning cultivation of the garden, contrary to Adam's remonstrances; and her so soon falling into the serpent's snares, though so very strongly warned: this is not consistent with the goodness which the poet before ascribed to her. To me it appears that there is a good deal of concealed satire in this: it was open to the poet to have represented her making a longer struggle; and not having before exposed herself, almost as if voluntarily, to the temptation. Eve ought to have been too happy in her favoured state to be seduced by the serpent's arguments, which were only calculated to mislead those who were oppressed, and saw pleasures around them, all of which they were restrained from tasting. The moment Eve partook of the poison, it produced an intoxication, which made it frighfully sensual; and I must confess, I think that Milton is not blameless, and has not his usual sanctity of strain, in the pictures he consequently draws: as poetry, it is exquisite; as morality, it is dangerous,—almost disgusting. Allow the story to take this turn, and the bard almost exceeds himself in richness: the remorse, sickness, and despondence which follow, are nobly exhibited; and here, perhaps, it will be contended, lies the moral: but the parties have deserved their fate; and this lessens our pity for them: for Adam ought not so easily to have yielded to Eve's persuasions,—fully aware as he was of the consequences. All this, I must venture to say, is an outrage upon the probable. The mutual crimination and recrimation is drawn with perfect mastery; but Eve's reproach to Adam, as being the more offending person because he had indulged her, is a little too provoking.

The descriptive parts glow with a uniform freshness, splendour, and nature; with a compactness of imagery, and a simple and naked force of language, which make all pictures of other poets fade away before them. There never appears a superfluous word, or one which is not pregnant with thought and matter.

The sentiments have a weight and a profundity of wisdom which seem like inspiration: out of every incident arises such reflections as have the spell of oracles.

As Milton lived in visions, all his dialogues were pertinent to his characters; and it is by these dialogues that the imagery, as connected with them, is made to have a double force. The inanimate material world derives almost all its interest from its connexion with human intellectuality: for this reason Gray expressed an opinion that a merely descriptive poem was an imperfect work. The charm of Gray's "Elegy" is, that all his imagery has a moral adjunct; but the moral of Milton is deeper, more extended, and more reflective, than of others: his illustrations are drawn from all the founts of knowledge, learning, and wisdom, sacred and profane: he has the art of making us see features and colours in the forms of nature, which we did not see before.

The ninth book is that on which the whole fate and fall of man turns; and so far is the most important. It is called the most tender. If the submission to sensual human passions be tenderness, it is so; taking the resistance to those passions to be loftiness. The serpent himself appears to have been enamoured of Eve's beauty and loveliness of mien, and for a moment to have repented of the evil he was plotting to bring upon her.

All that we know from the Mosaic history is, that the serpent tempted Eve, and Eve tempted Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit; but we do not know by what wiles this sin was brought about. We may suppose that by the serpent the operation of the evil passions of contradiction, disobedience, rebellion, and scepticism was meant;

just as we may suppose that Eve persisted in roaming alone in spite of Adam's dissuasions, merely because her pride was thwarted by her husband's fear that "some harm should befall her" in his absence.

Critics will say, that had she been more purely virtuous, Heaven would not have decreed the loss of Paradise; and therefore that it was of the essence of the story to represent her thus guilty. It may be deemed highly presumptuous in me to suggest that Milton might have represented her equally guilty, with more probability and more spirituality. He might have painted mental delusions rather than the intoxicating pleasures of the senses: it was open to him to follow his own course in the inventions of his overflowing imagination; but it could never be necessary to Milton's genius to dwell on matter rather than on spirit. The luxuriance of description has made this a favourite book of the poem: it is this luxuriance which I think misplaced in so holy a work.

ARGUMENT.

SATAN having encompassed the earth, with meditated guile, returns, as a mist, by night into Paradise; enters into the serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart: Adam consents not, alleging the danger, lest that enemy, of whom they were forewarned, should attempt her found alone: Eve, loth to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength: Adam at last yields; the serpent finds her alone: his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking; with much flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech, and such understanding, not till now: the serpent answers, that by tasting of a certain tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both: Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the tree of knowledge forbidden; the serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat; she, pleased with the taste, deliberates awhile whether to impart thereof to Adam or not; at last brings him of the fruit; relates what persuaded her to eat thereof: Adam, at first amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her; and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit: the effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

No more of talk[a] where God or angel guest[b]
With man, as with his friend, familiar used
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast; permitting him the while

[a] *No more of talk.*

These prologues, or prefaces of Milton to some of his books, speaking of his own person, lamenting his blindness, and preferring his subject to those of Homer and Virgil, and the greatest poets before him, are condemned by some critics; and it must be allowed that we find no such digression in the "Iliad" or "Æneid:"—it is a liberty that can be taken only by such a genius as Milton, and I question whether it would have succeeded in any hands but his. As Voltaire says upon the occasion, I cannot but own that an author is generally guilty of an unpardonable self-love, when he lays aside his subject to descant upon his own person:—but that human frailty is to be forgiven in Milton; nay, I am pleased with it. He gratifies the curiosity he has raised in me about his person;—when I admire the author, I desire to know something of the man; and he, whom all readers would be glad to know, is allowed to speak of himself. But this, however, is a very dangerous example for a genius of an inferior order, and is only to be justified by success. See Voltaire's "Essay on Epic Poetry," p. 111. But as Mr. Thyer adds, however some critics may condemn a poet's sometimes digressing from his subject to speak of himself, it is very certain that Milton was of a very different opinion long before he thought of writing this poem: for, in his discourse of the "Reason of Church Government," &c., apologising for saying so much of himself as he there does, he adds,—"For, although a poet, soar-

Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change
Those notes to tragic [c]; foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal on the part of man, revolt
And disobedience: on the part of Heaven
Now alienated, distance and distaste,
Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given,
That brought into this world a world of woe,
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
Death's harbinger: sad task! yet argument
Not less, but more heroic, than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplex'd the Greek, and Cytherea's son;
If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse:
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleased me, long choosing, and beginning late [d];
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument [e]

ing in the high region of his fancies, with his garland and singing robes about him, might, without apology, speak more of himself than I mean to do; yet for me, sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing among many readers of no empyreal conceit, to venture and divulge unusual things of myself, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me," vol. i. p. 59, ed. 1738.—NEWTON.

[b] *God or angel guest.*

Milton, who knew and studied the Scripture thoroughly, and continually profits himself of its vast sublimity, as well as of the more noble treasures it contains, and to which his poem owes its greatest lustre, has done it here very remarkably.—RICHARDSON.

The poet says that he must now treat no more of familiar discourse with either God or angel; for Adam had held discourse with God, as we read in the preceding book; and the whole foregoing episode is a conversation with the angel.—NEWTON.

[c] *I now must change*
Those notes to tragic.

As the author is now changing his subject, he professes likewise to change his style agreeably to it: the reader therefore must not expect such lofty images and descriptions as before. What follows is more of the tragic strain than of the epic:—which may serve as an answer to those critics who censure the latter books of the "Paradise Lost," as falling below the former.—NEWTON.

[d] *Long choosing, and beginning late.*

Milton intended pretty early to write an epic poem, and proposed the story of "King Arthur" for the subject; but that was laid aside, probably for the reasons here intimated. The "Paradise Lost" he designed at first as a tragedy: it was not till long after that he began to form it into an epic poem; and, indeed, for several years he was so hotly engaged in the controversies of the times, that he was not at leisure to think of a work of this nature; and did not begin to fashion it in its present form till after the Salmasian controversy, which ended in 1655; and probably did not set about the work in earnest till after the Restoration: so that he was "long choosing, and beginning late."—NEWTON.

[e] *The only argument.*

The three species of the epic poem are morality, politics, and religion: these have

Heroic deem'd; chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights,
In battles feign'd: the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung; or to describe races and games[f],
Or tilting furniture, imblazon'd shields,
Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases[g] and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament; then marshall'd feast
Served up in hall with sewers and seneshals:
The skill of artifice or office mean,
Not that which justly gives heroic name
To person or to poem. Me, of these
Nor skill'd nor studious, higher argument
Remains; sufficient of itself to raise
That name, unless an age too late, or cold[h]
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
Depress'd; and much they may, if all be mine,
Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.
  The sun was sunk, and after him the star
Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter
'Twixt day and night[i]; and now from end to end
Night's hemisphere had veil'd the horizon round;

been occupied by Homer, Virgil, and Milton. Here then the grand scene is closed, and all farther improvements of the epic at an end.—NEWTON.

A cruel sentence indeed, and a very severe statute of limitation; enough, if it had any foundation, to destroy any future attempt of any exalted genius that might arise. But, in truth, the assertion is totally groundless and chimerical. Each of the three poets might change the stations here assigned to them: Homer might assume to himself the province of politics; Virgil, of morality; and Milton, of both; who is also a strong proof that human action is not the largest sphere of epic poetry.—JOS. WARTON.

[f] *Races and games.*

As the ancient poets have done; Homer in the twenty-third book of the "Iliad;" Virgil in the fifth book of the "Æneid;" and Statius in the sixth book of his "Thebaid:" or tilts and tournaments, which are often the subject of the modern poets, as Ariosto, Spenser, and the like.—NEWTON.

[g] *Bases.*

Bases signify the mantle which hung down from the middle to about the knees, or lower, worn by knights on horseback.—TODD.

[h] *An age too late, or cold.*

He has a thought of the same kind in his "Reason of Church Government," b. ii. speaking of epic poems:—"If to the instinct of nature, and the imboldening of art, aught may be trusted; and that there be nothing adverse in our climate, or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in our own ancient stories."—*Or years damp*, &c. For he was near sixty when this poem was published: and it is surprising, that, at that time of life, and after such troublesome days as he had passed through, he should have so much poetical fire remaining.—NEWTON.

[i] *Short arbiter*
'Twixt day and night.

This expression was probably borrowed from the beginning of Sidney's "Arcadia," where, speaking of the sun about the time of the equinox, he calls him "an indifferent arbiter between the night and the day."—NEWTON.

When Satan, who late fled before the threats
Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved
In meditated fraud and malice, bent
On man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless return'd.
By night he fled, and at midnight return'd
From compassing the earth; cautious of day
Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried
His entrance, and forewarn'd the cherubim
That kept their watch; thence full of anguish driven,
The space of seven continued nights [j] he rode
With darkness; thrice the equinoctial line
He circled; four times cross'd the car of night
From pole to pole, traversing each colure [k];
On the eighth return'd; and, on the coast averse
From entrance or cherubic watch, by stealth
Found unsuspected way. There was a place,
Now not, though sin, not time, first wrought the change,
Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,
Into a gulf shot underground; till part
Rose up a fountain by the tree of life:
In with the river sunk, and with it rose,
Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought
Where to lie hid: sea he had search'd, and land
From Eden over Pontus [l], and the pool
Mæotis, up beyond the river Ob;
Downward as far antarctic; and in length,
West from Orontes to the ocean barr'd [m]
At Darien; thence to the land where flows
Ganges and Indus: thus the orb he roam'd
With narrow search; and with inspection deep
Consider'd every creature, which of all
Most opportune might serve his wiles; and found
The serpent subtlest beast [n] of all the field.
Him, after long debate irresolute
Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose;

[j] *Seven continued nights.*

Satan was three days compassing the earth from east to west, and four days from north to south, but still kept always in the shade of night; and, after a whole week's peregrination in this manner, on the eighth night returned by stealth into Paradise. —Newton.

[k] *Each colure.*

The colures are two great circles, intersecting each other at right angles in the poles of the world, and encompassing the earth from north to south, and from south to north again.—Newton.

[l] *From Eden over Pontus.*

As we had before an astronomical, so here we have a geographical account of Satan's peregrinations.—Newton.

[m] *Ocean barr'd.*

See Job xxxviii. 10:—"And set bars to the sea."—Newton.

[n] *The serpent, subtlest beast.*

So Moses, Gen. iii. 1:—"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field."

Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom
To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
From sharpest sight; for, in the wily snake
Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark,
As from his wit and native subtlety
Proceeding; which, in other beasts observed,
Doubt might beget of diabolic power
Active within, beyond the sense of brute.
Thus he resolved; but first from inward grief
His bursting passion into plaints thus pour'd:
  O earth, how like to heaven, if not preferr'd [o]
More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built
With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
For what God, after better, worse would build?
Terrestrial heaven, danced round by other heavens
That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,
Light above light, for thee alone, as seems;
In thee concentring all their precious beams
Of sacred influence! As God in heaven
Is centre, yet extends to all; so thou,
Centring, receivest from all those orbs; in thee,
Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears
Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
Of creatures animate with gradual life,
Of growth, sense, reason [p], all summ'd up in man.
With what delight could I have walked thee round,
If I could joy in aught! sweet interchange
Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,
Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crown'd,
Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these
Find place or refuge; and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel

[o] *If not preferr'd.*

I reckon this panegyric upon the earth among the less perfect parts of the poem. The beginning is extravagant, and what follows is not consistent with what the author had said before, in his description of Satan's passage among the stars and planets, which are said then to appear to him as other worlds inhabited. See b. iii. 566. The imagination, that all the heavenly bodies were created for the sake of the earth, was natural to human ignorance; and human vanity might find its account in it, but neither of these could influence Satan.—HEYLIN.

It is common for people to undervalue what they have forfeited and lost by their folly and wickedness, and to overvalue any good that they hope to attain: so Satan is here made to question whether earth be not preferable to heaven; but this is spoken of earth in its primitive and original beauty before the Fall.

Satan was willing to insinuate imperfection in God, as if he had mended his hand by creation, and as if all the works of God were not perfect in their kinds, and in their degrees, and for the ends for which they were intended.—NEWTON.

[p] *Of growth, sense, reason.*

The three kinds of life, rising as it were by steps, the vegetable, animal, and rational; of all which man partakes, and he only: he grows as plants, minerals, and all things inanimate; he lives as all other animal creatures; but is over and above endued with reason.—RICHARDSON.

Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
Of contraries: all good to me becomes
Bane, and in heaven much worse would be my state.
But neither here seek I, no, nor in heaven
To dwell, unless by mastering heaven's Supreme:
Nor hope to be myself less miserable
By what I seek, but others to make such
As I, though thereby worse to me redound:
For only in destroying I find ease
To my relentless thoughts; and, him destroy'd,
Or won to what may work his utter loss,
For whom all this was made; all this will soon
Follow, as to him link'd in weal or woe:
In woe then; that destruction wide may range.
To me shall be the glory sole among
The infernal powers, in one day to have marr'd
What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days
Continued making; and who knows how long
Before had been contriving? though perhaps
Not longer than since I, in one night, freed
From servitude inglorious well nigh half
The angelic name, and thinner left the throng
Of his adorers: he, to be avenged,
And to repair his numbers thus impair'd,
Whether such virtue spent of old now fail'd
More angels to create, if they at least
Are his created [q]; or, to spite us more,
Determined to advance into our room
A creature form'd of earth; and him endow,
Exalted from so base original,
With heavenly spoils, our spoils: what he decreed
He effected; man he made, and for him built
Magnificent this world, and earth his seat,
Him lord pronounced; and, O indignity!
Subjected to his service angel-wings,
And flaming ministers to watch and tend
Their earthly charge: of these the vigilance
I dread; and, to elude, thus wrapp'd in mist
Of midnight vapour glide obscure; and pry
In every bush and brake, where hap may find
The serpent sleeping; in whose mazy folds
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
With gods to sit the highest, am now constrain'd
Into a beast; and, mix'd with bestial slime,

[q] *If they at least*
Are his created.

He questions whether the angels were created by God: he had before asserted that they were not, to the angels themselves, b. v. 859.—NEWTON.

This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the highth of deity aspired!
But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to? Who aspires, must down as low
As high he soar'd; obnoxious, first or last,
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils[r]:
Let it; I reck not[s], so it light well aim'd,
Since higher I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new favourite
Of heaven, this man of clay, son of despite;
Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised
From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid.
  So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,
Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on
His midnight search, where soonest he might find
The serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found
In labyrinth of many a round self-roll'd,
His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
Nor nocent yet; but, on the grassy herb,
Fearless unfear'd he slept: in at his mouth
The devil enter'd; and his brutal sense,
In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired
With act intelligential; but his sleep
Disturb'd not, waiting close the approach of morn.
  Now, when as sacred light[t] began to dawn
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed
Their morning incense[u], when all things that breathe,

[r] *Back on itself recoils.*

The same sentiment as in "Comus," v. 593:—

But evil on itself shall back recoil.—TODD.

[s] *Let it; I reck not.*

A truly diabolical sentiment. So he can but be any way revenged, he does not value, though his revenge recoil on himself.—NEWTON.

I have often wondered that this speech of Satan's escaped the particular observation of Addison. There is not in my opinion any one in the whole book that is worked up with greater judgment, or better suited to the character of the speaker. There is all the horrour and malignity of a fiend-like spirit expressed; and yet this is so artfully tempered with Satan's starts of recollection upon the meanness and folly of what he was going to undertake, as plainly show the remains of the archangel, and the ruins of a superior nature.—THYER.

[t] *Now, when as sacred light.*

This is the morning of the ninth day, as far as we can reckon the time in this poem; a great part of the action lying out of the sphere of day. The first day we reckon that wherein Satan came to the earth; the space of seven days after that he was coasting round the earth; he comes into Paradise again by night; and this is the beginning of the ninth day, and the last of man's innocence and happiness. The morning is often called "sacred" by the poets, because that time is usually allotted to sacrifice and devotion, as Eustathius says, in his remarks on Homer.

[u] *Their morning incense.*

Incense of the breathing spring.—POPE.
Incense-breathing morn.—GRAY.

From the earth's great altar send up silent praise
To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
And join'd their vocal worship to the quire
Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs:
Then commune, how that day they best may ply
Their growing work; for much their work outgrew
The hands' dispatch of two, gardening so wide;
And Eve first to her husband thus began:
  Adam, well may we labour, still to dress
This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,
Our pleasant task enjoin'd; but, till more hands
Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
Luxurious by restraint: what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
One night or two with wanton growth derides,
Tending to wild. Thou therefore now advise,
Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present;
Let us divide our labours; thou, where choice
Leads thee, or where most needs; whether to wind
The woodbine round this arbour, or direct
The clasping ivy where to climb: while I,
In yonder spring of roses intermix'd
With myrtle, find what to redress till noon:
For, while so near each other thus all day
Our task we choose, what wonder if so near[v]
Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
Casual discourse draw on; which intermits
Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
Early, and the hour of supper comes unearn'd?
  To whom mild answer Adam thus return'd:
Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
Compare above all living creatures dear!
Well hast thou motion'd, well thy thoughts employ'd
How we might best fulfil the work which here
God hath assign'd us; nor of me shalt pass
Unpraised; for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.
Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed
Labour, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse

[v] *So near.*

The repetition, *so near*, is extremely beautiful; and naturally comes in here, as the chief intent of Eve's speech was to persuade Adam to let her go from him: she therefore dwells on *so near*, as the great obstacle to their working to any purpose.—STILLINGFLEET.

Of looks and smiles; for smiles from reason flow,
To brute denied, and are of love the food;
Love, not the lowest end of human life.
For not to irksome toil, but to delight,
He made us, and delight to reason join'd.
These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands
Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide
As we need walk; till younger hands ere long
Assist us: but if much converse perhaps
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield;
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return.
But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
Befall thee sever'd from me; for thou know'st
What hath been warn'd us; what malicious foe,
Envying our happiness, and of his own
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
His wish and best advantage, us asunder;
Hopeless to circumvent us join'd, where each
To other speedy aid might lend at need:
Whether his first design be to withdraw
Our fealty from God; or to disturb
Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoy'd by us excites his envy more;
Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being, still shades thee, and protects.
The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.
To whom the virgin majesty of Eve [w],
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus replied:
Offspring of heaven and earth, and all earth's lord!
That such an enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee inform'd I learn,
And from the parting angel over-heard,
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
Just then return'd at shut of evening flowers [x].

[w] *The virgin majesty of Eve.*

The ancients used the word virgin with more latitude than we; as Virgil calls Pasiphae virgin, after she had three children, Ecl. vi. 47; and Ovid calls Medea "adultera virgo," Epist. Hypsip. Jas. v. 133. It is put here to denote beauty, bloom, sweetness, modesty, and all the amiable characters which are usually found in a virgin; and these with matron majesty: what a picture!—RICHARDSON.

[x] *Evening flowers.*

What a natural notation of evening is this! And a proper time for her, who had gone "forth among her fruits and flowers," b. viii. 44, to return. But we must not conceive that Eve is speaking of the evening last past, for this was a week ago. Satan

But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
His violence thou fear'st not; being such
As we, not capable of death or pain,
Can either not receive, or can repel.
His fraud is then thy fear; which plain infers
Thy equal fear, that my firm faith and love
Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced;
Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast,
Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?
To whom with healing words Adam replied:
Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve!
For such thou art; from sin and blame entire:
Not diffident of thee, do I dissuade
Thy absence from my sight; but to avoid
The attempt itself, intended by our foe.
For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
The tempted with dishonour foul; supposed
Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
Against temptation: thou thyself with scorn
And anger wouldst resent the offer'd wrong,
Though ineffectual found: misdeem not then,
If such affront I labour to avert
From thee alone, which on us both at once
The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;
Or daring, first on me the assault shall light.
Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn:
Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce
Angels; nor think superfluous others' aid.
I, from the influence of thy looks, receive
Access in every virtue: in thy sight
More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
Shame to be overcome or over-reach'd,
Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite.
Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel
When I am present, and thy trial choose
With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?
So spake domestic Adam in his care
And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought

was caught tempting Eve in a dream, and fled out of Paradise that night; and with this ends book the fourth. After he had fled out of Paradise, he was ranging round the world seven days; but we have not any account of Adam and Eve, excepting only on the first of those days, which begins with the beginning of book the fifth, where Eve relates her dream: that day at noon the angel Raphael comes down from heaven; the angel and Adam discourse together till evening, and they part at the end of book the eighth. There are six days therefore passed in silence; and we hear no more of Adam and Eve till Satan has stolen again into Paradise.—NEWTON.

Less attributed to her faith sincere,
Thus her reply with accent sweet renew'd:
  If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit straiten'd by a foe,
Subtle or violent, we not endued
Single with like defence, wherever met;
How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
But harm precedes not sin: only our foe,
Tempting, affronts us with his foul esteem
Of our integrity: his foul esteem
Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns
Foul on himself; then wherefore shunn'd or fear'd
By us? who rather double honour gain
From his surmise proved false; find peace within,
Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event.
And what is faith, love, virtue, unassay'd
Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?
Let us not then suspect our happy state
Left so imperfect by the Maker wise,
As not secure to single or combined.
Frail is our happiness, if this be so;
And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed.
  To whom thus Adam fervently[y] replied:
O woman, best are all things as the will
Of God ordain'd them: his creating hand
Nothing imperfect or deficient left
Of all that he created: much less man,
Or aught that might his happy state secure,
Secure from outward force: within himself
The danger lies, yet lies within his power:
Against his will he can receive no harm:
But God left free the will; for what obeys

[y] *Thus Adam fervently.*

What Eve had just now said required some reprimand from Adam, and it was necessary to describe him as in some degree displeased; but what extreme delicacy has our author shown in choosing the word *fervently* to express it by! A term, which, though it implies some emotion, yet carries nothing in its idea inconsistent with that subserviency of the passions which subsisted before the Fall. In the two foregoing speeches he had made Adam address himself to her in the affectionate terms of "sole Eve, associate sole," and "Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve;" but here with great judgment he changes those endearing words for these more authoritative,—"O woman!" I should think that Milton in this expression alluded to what our Saviour said to the Virgin Mary,—"Woman, what have I to do with thee?" were not I satisfied that he could not with his learning take these words in the vulgar mistaken sense, which our translation naturally leads ignorant readers into; and must very well know that Γυνὴ, amongst the Greeks, is a term of great respect. Indeed, throughout this whole conversation, which the poet has in every respect worked up to a faultless perfection, there is the most exact observance of justness and propriety of character. With what strength is the superior excellency of man's understanding here pointed out, and how nicely does our author here sketch out the defects peculiar in general to the female mind! and after all, what great art has he shown in making Adam, contrary to his better reason, grant his spouse's request, beautifully verifying what he had made our general ancestor a little before observe to the angel! b. viii. 546, &c.—THYER.

Reason, is free; and reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect;
Lest, by some fair-appearing good surprised,
She dictate false, and misinform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid.
Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins,
That I should mind thee oft: and mind thou me.
Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve;
Since reason not impossibly may meet
Some specious object by the foe suborn'd,
And fall into deception unaware,
Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warn'd.
Seek not temptation then, which to avoid
Were better, and most likely if from me
Thou sever not: trial will come unsought.
Wouldst thou approve thy constancy? approve
First thy obedience; the other who can know?
Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
But if thou think trial unsought may find
Us both securer than thus warn'd thou seem'st,
Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more[a];
Go in thy native innocence, rely
On what thou hast of virtue; summon all:
For God towards thee hath done his part; do thine.
  So spake the patriarch of mankind; but Eve
Persisted; yet submiss, though last, replied:
  With thy permission then, and thus forwarn'd
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touch'd only; that our trial, when least sought,
May find us both perhaps far less prepared;
The willinger I go, nor much expect
A foe so proud will first the weaker seek;
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.
  Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and, like a wood-nymph light,
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,
Betook her to the groves; but Delia's self
In gait surpass'd, and goddess-like deport,
Though not as she with bow and quiver arm'd,
But with such gardening-tools as art, yet rude,
Guiltless of fire, had form'd, or angels brought.

[a] *Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more.*

It is related of Milton's first wife, that she had not cohabited with him above a month, before she was very desirous of returning to her friends in the country, there to spend the remainder of the summer. We may suppose that, upon this occasion, their conversation was somewhat of the same nature as Adam and Eve's; and it was upon some such consideration as this, that, after much solicitation, he permitted her to go. It is the more probable that he alluded to his own case in this account of Adam and Eve's parting; as, in the account of their reconciliation, it will appear that he copied exactly what happened to himself.—NEWTON.

To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorn'd,
Likest she seem'd; Pomona, when she fled
Vertumnus; or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove[a].
Her long with ardent look his eye pursued
Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
Oft he to her his charge of quick return
Repeated: she to him as oft engaged
To be return'd by noon amid the bower,
And all things in best order to invite
Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
Oh, much deceived[b], much failing, hapless Eve,
Of thy presumed return! event perverse!
Thou never from that hour in Paradise
Found'st either sweet repast or sound repose;
Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,
Waited with hellish rancour imminent
To intercept thy way, or send thee back
Despoil'd of innocence, of faith, of bliss!
For now, and since first break of dawn, the fiend,
Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come;
And on his quest, where likeliest he might find
The only two of mankind, but in them
The whole included race, his purposed prey.
In bower and field he sought, where any tuft
Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,
Their tendance, or plantation for delight;
By fountain or by shady rivulet
He sought them both, but wish'd his hap might find
Eve separate; he wish'd, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanced; when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veil'd in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half-spied, so thick the roses blushing round
About her glow'd, oft stooping to support
Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay
Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
Hung drooping unsustain'd; them she upstays
Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed

[a] *Virgin of Proserpina from Jove.*

A virgin, not having yet conceived Proserpina, who was begot by Jove.—WARBURTON.

[b] *Oh, much deceived.*

That is, much failing of thy presumed return. These beautiful apostrophes and anticipations are frequent in the poets, who affect to speak in the character of prophets, and like men inspired with the knowledge of futurity. See Virg. Æn. x. 501, &c., and Homer, Il. xvii. 497.—NEWTON.

Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm;
Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen,
Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers
Imborder'd on each bank, the hand of Eve:
Spot more delicious than those gardens feign'd
Or of revived Adonis, or renown'd
Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son;
Or that, not mystic[c], where the sapient king
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.
Much he the place admired, the person more.
As one who, long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight,
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound;
If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more;
She most, and in her look sums all delight:
Such pleasure took the serpent to behold
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone: her heavenly form
Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture, or least action, overawed
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
That space the evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil[d], and for the time remain'd
Stupidly good; of enmity disarm'd,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge:
But the hot hell that always in him burns,
Though in mid heaven, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure, not for him ordain'd: then soon
Fierce hate he recollects; and all his thoughts
Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites:
  Thoughts, whither have ye led me? with what sweet
Compulsion thus transported, to forget
What hither brought us? hate, not love; nor hope
Of Paradise for hell, hope here to taste
Of pleasure; but all pleasure to destroy,
Save what is in destroying: other joy
To me is lost. Then, let me not let pass

[c] *Or that, not mystic.*

The garden of Solomon.—Todd.

[d] *From his own evil.*

This passage is pre-eminently beautiful, and of extraordinary originality.

Occasion which now smiles; behold alone
The woman, opportune to all attempts,
Her husband (for I view far round) not nigh,
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;
Foe not informidable! exempt from wound,
I not; so much hath hell debased, and pain
Enfeebled me, to what I was in heaven.
She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods!
Not terrible, though terrour be in love
And beauty, not approach'd by stronger hate,
Hate stronger, under show of love well feign'd;
The way which to her ruin now I tend.
So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad! and toward Eve
Address'd his way: not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since; but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that tower'd
Fold above fold[e], a surging maze! his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
With burnish'd neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape
And lovely; never since of serpent-kind
Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed
Hermione and Cadmus[f], or the god
In Epidaurus; nor to which transform'd
Ammonian Jove or Capitoline was seen;
He with Olympias; this with her who bore
Scipio, the highth of Rome. With tract oblique
At first, as one who sought access, but fear'd
To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail:
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curl'd many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
To lure her eye; she, busied, heard the sound
Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used

[e] *Fold above fold.*

We have the description of such a sort of serpent in Ovid, Met. iii. 32:—

Cristis praesignis et auro;
Igne micant oculi.————
Ille volubilibus squamosos nexibus orbes
Torquet, et immensos saltu sinuatur in arcus:
Ac media plus parte leves erectus in auras,
Despicit omne nemus, &c.

[f] *Hermione and Cadmus.*

The serpents that changed Hermione and Cadmus into themselves.

To such disport before her through the field,
From every beast; more duteous at her call,
Than at Circean call the herd disguised.
He, bolder now, uncall'd before her stood,
But as in gaze admiring: oft he bow'd
His turret crest, and sleek enamel'd neck,
Fawning; and lick'd the ground whereon she trod.
His gentle dumb expression turn'd at length
The eye of Eve, to mark his play; he, glad
Of her attention gain'd, with serpent-tongue
Organic, or impulse of vocal air[g],
His fraudulent temptation thus began:
  Wonder not, sovran mistress, if perhaps
Thou canst, who art sole wonder! much less arm
Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,
Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiate; I thus single; nor have fear'd
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
With ravishment beheld! there best beheld,
Where universally admired; but here
In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
A goddess among gods, adored and served
By angels numberless, thy daily train.
  So glozed the tempter, and his proem tuned:
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marvelling; at length,
Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake:
  What may this mean? language of man pronounced
By tongue of brute, and human sense express'd?
The first, at least, of these I thought denied
To beasts; whom God, on their creation-day,
Created mute to all articulate sound:
The latter I demur; for in their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all the field
I knew, but not with human voice endued:
Redouble then this miracle, and say,
How camest thou speakable of mute; and how

[g] *Organic, or impulse of vocal air.*

That the devil moved the serpent's tongue, and used it as an instrument to form that tempting speech he made to Eve, is the opinion of some; that he formed a voice by impression of the sounding air, distant from the serpent, is that of others; of which Milton has left the curious to their choice.—HUME.

To me so friendly grown above the rest
Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
Say, for such wonder claims attention due.
  To whom the guileful tempter thus replied:
Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve!
Easy to me it is to tell thee all
What thou command'st; and right thou shouldst be obeyed:
I was at first as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
As was my food; nor aught but food discern'd,
Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:
Till, on a day roving the field, I chanced
A goodly tree far distant to behold
Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mix'd,
Ruddy and gold: I nearer drew to gaze;
When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense
Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats
Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even,
Unsuck'd of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved
Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,
Powerful persuaders, quicken'd at the scent
Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.
About the mossy trunk I wound me soon;
For, high from ground, the branches would require
Thy utmost reach or Adam's: round the tree
All other beasts that saw, with like desire
Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill
I spared not; for such pleasure till that hour,
At feed or fountain, never had I found.
Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
Strange alteration in me, to degree
Of reason in my inward powers; and speech
Wanted not long; though to this shape retain'd.
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
I turn'd my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Consider'd all things visible in heaven,
Or earth, or middle; all things fair and good:
But all that fair and good in thy divine
Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,
United I beheld; no fair to thine
Equivalent or second! which compell'd
Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come
And gaze, and worship thee, of right declared
Sovran of creatures, universal dame!

So talk'd[h] the spirited sly snake; and Eve,
Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:
Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved:
But say, where grows the tree? from hence how far?
For many are the trees of God that grow
In Paradise, and various, yet unknown
To us; in such abundance lies our choice,
As leaves a greater store of fruit untouch'd
Still hanging incorruptible, till men
Grow up to their provision, and more hands
Help to disburden nature of her birth.
To whom the wily adder, blithe and glad:
Empress, the way is ready, and not long;
Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,
Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
Of blowing myrrh and balm: if thou accept
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon.
Lead then, said Eve. He, leading, swiftly roll'd
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest. As when a wandering fire,
Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round,
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool;
There swallow'd up and lost, from succour far:
So glister'd the dire snake, and into fraud
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree
Of prohibition, root of all our woe;
Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake:
Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
The credit of whose virtue rest with thee;
Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects!
But of this tree we may not taste nor touch;
God so commanded, and left that command
Sole daughter of his voice: the rest, we live
Law to ourselves[i]; our reason is our law.
To whom the tempter guilefully replied:

[h] *So talk'd.*

Milton has shown more art in taking off the common objections to the Mosaic history of the temptation, by the addition of some circumstances of his own invention, than in any other theological part of his poem.—WARBURTON.

[i] *Law to ourselves.*

See Rom. ii. 14: "These, having not the law, are a law unto themselves."—RICHARDSON.

Indeed[k]! hath God then said that of the fruit
Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,
Yet lords declared of all in earth or air?
To whom thus Eve, yet sinless: Of the fruit
Of each tree in the garden we may eat;
But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
The garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold
The tempter, but with show of zeal and love
To man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on; and, as to passion moved,
Fluctuates disturb'd, yet comely, and in act
Raised, as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renown'd,
In Athens, or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourish'd, since mute, to some great cause address'd,
Stood in himself collected; while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue;
Sometimes in highth began, as no delay
Of preface brooking, through his zeal of right:
So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown,
The tempter, all impassion'd, thus began:
O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant,
Mother of science! now I feel thy power
Within me clear; not only to discern
Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest agents, deem'd however wise.
Queen of this universe! do not believe
Those rigid threats of death: ye shall not die[l];
How should you? by the fruit? it gives you life
To knowledge; by the threatener? look on me,
Me, who have touched and tasted; yet both live,
And life more perfect have attain'd than fate
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast
Is open? or will God incense his ire
For such a petty trespass? and not praise

[k] *Indeed.*

See Gen. iii. 1: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" In which our author has followed the Chaldee paraphrase, interpreting the Hebrew particle *indeed.* Is it true that God has forbidden you to eat of the fruits of Paradise? as if He had forbidden them to taste, not of one, but of all the trees; another of Satan's sly insinuations. The Hebrew particle *yea,* or *indeed,* plainly shows that the short and summary account which Moses gives of the serpent's temptation has respect to some previous discourse, which could, in all probability, be no other than what Milton has pitched upon.—HUME.

[l] *Ye shall not die.*

See Gen. iii. 4: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." And it is very artfully contrived by Milton to make the serpent give an instance in himself.—NEWTON.

Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of death denounced, whatever thing death be,
Deterr'd not from achieving what might lead
To happier life, knowledge of good and evil;
Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not know, since easier shunn'd?
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just:
Not just, not God; not fear'd then, nor obey'd:
Your fear itself of death[m] removes the fear.
Why then was this forbid? why, but to awe?
Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshippers? He knows, that in the day
Ye eat thereof, your eyes, that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Open'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as gods,
Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
That ye shall be as gods, since I as man,
Internal man, is but proportion meet;
I, of brute, human; ye, of human, gods.
So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
Human, to put on gods; death to be wish'd,
Though threaten'd, which no worse than this can bring.
And what are gods, that man may not become
As they, participating godlike food?
The gods are first, and that advantage use
On our belief, that all from them proceeds:
I question it; for this fair earth I see,
Warm'd by the sun, producing every kind;
Them, nothing: if they all things; who enclosed
Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,
That whoso eats thereof, forthwith attains
Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies
The offence, that man should thus attain to know?
What can your knowledge hurt him, or this tree
Impart against his will, if all be his?
Or is it envy? and can envy dwell
In heavenly breasts? These, these, and many more
Causes import your need of this fair fruit.
Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste.
He ended; and his words, replete with guile,
Into her heart too easy entrance won:
Fix'd on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd

[m] *Your fear itself of death.*

Justice is inseparable from the very being and essence of God; so that could He be unjust, He would be no longer God, and then neither to be obeyed nor feared; so that the fear of death, which does imply injustice in God, destroys itself, because God can as well cease to be, as to be just: a Satanic syllogism.—HUME.

With reason, to her seeming, and with truth:
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
An eager appetite, raised by the smell
So savoury of that fruit, which with desire,
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye; yet first
Pausing awhile, thus to herself she mused:
  Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,
Though kept from man, and worthy to be admired;
Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise.
Thy praise he also, who forbids thy use,
Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree
Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;
Forbids us then to taste: but his forbidding
Commends thee more, while it infers the good
By thee communicated, and our want:
For good unknown sure is not had; or, had
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
In plain then, what forbids he but to know,
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
Such prohibitions bind not. But, if death
Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
Our inward freedom? In the day we eat
Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die!
How dies the serpent? he hath eaten and lives,
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
Irrational till then. For us alone
Was death invented? or to us denied
This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?
For beasts it seems: yet that one beast which first
Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy
The good befallen him, authour unsuspect,
Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.
What fear I then? rather, what know to fear
Under this ignorance of good or evil,
Of God or death, of law or penalty?
Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,
Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
Of virtue to make wise: what hinders then
To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?
  So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she eat!
Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
The guilty serpent, and well might; for Eve,
Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else

Regarded; such delight till then, as seem'd,
In fruit she never tasted; whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge: nor was godhead from her thought.
Greedily she ingorged without restraint,
And knew not eating death: satiate at length,
And highten'd as with wine, jocund and boon,
Thus to herself[n] she pleasingly began:
  O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees
In Paradise! of operation blest
To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed,
And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
Created; but henceforth my early care,
Not without song, each morning, and due praise,
Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
Of thy full branches offer'd free to all;
Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
In knowledge, as the gods, who all things know;
Though others envy what they cannot give:
For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here
Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe,
Best guide: not following thee, I had remain'd
In ignorance; thou open'st wisdom's way,
And givest access, though secret she retire.
And I perhaps am secret[o]: Heaven is high,
High, and remote to see from thence distinct
Each thing on earth; and other care perhaps
May have diverted from continual watch

[n] *Thus to herself.*

As our author had, in the preceding conference betwixt our first parents, described, with the greatest art and decency, the subordination and inferiority of the female character in strength of reason and understanding; so, in this soliloquy of Eve's, after tasting the forbidden fruit, one may observe the same judgment, in his varying and adapting it to the condition of her fallen nature. Instead of those little defects in her intellectual faculties before the Fall, which were sufficiently compensated by her outward charms, and were rather softenings than blemishes in her character, we see her now running into the greatest absurdities, and indulging the wildest imaginations. It has been remarked that our poet, in this work, seems to court the favour of his female readers very much: yet I cannot help thinking, but that in this place he intended a satirical as well as a moral hint to the ladies, in making one of Eve's first thoughts, after her fatal lapse, to be how to get the superiority and mastery over her husband. There is, however, I think, a defect in this speech of Eve's, that there is no notice taken of the serpent in it. Our author very naturally represents her, in the first transports of delight, expressing her gratitude to the fruit, which she fancied had wrought such a happy change in her; and next to "experience, her best guide;" but how is it possible that she should, in these rapturous acknowledgments, forget her guide and instructor, the serpent, to whom, in her then notion of things, she must think herself the most indebted? I do not doubt that Milton was sensible of this; but, had he made Eve mention the serpent, he could not have avoided too making her observe that he was slunk away; which might have given her some suspicions, and would consequently have much altered the scene which follows between Adam and her.—THYER.

[o] *And I perhaps am secret.*

She questions even God's omniscience, and flatters herself that she is still in secret, like other sinners, who say, "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it." Psalm xciv. 7.—NEWTON.

Our Great Forbidder, safe with all his spies
About him. But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with me; or rather not,
But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
Without copartner? so to add what wants
In female sex, the more to draw his love,
And render me more equal; and perhaps,
A thing not undesirable, sometime
Superiour; for, inferiour, who is free?
This may be well: but what if God have seen,
And death ensue? then I shall be no more!
And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;
A death to think! Confirm'd then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:
So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
I could endure, without him live no life.
  So saying, from the tree her step she turn'd;
But first low reverence done, as to the power
That dwelt within, whose presence had infused
Into the plant sciential sap, derived
From nectar, drink of gods. Adam the while,
Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn
Her tresses, and her rural labours crown;
As reapers oft are wont their harvest queen.
Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new
Solace in her return, so long delay'd:
Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,
Misgave him; he the faltering measure felt;
And forth to meet her went, the way she took
That morn when first they parted: by the tree
Of knowledge he must pass; there he her met,
Scarce from the tree returning; in her hand
A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,
New gather'd, and ambrosial smell diffused.
To him she hasted; in her face excuse
Came prologue, and apology too prompt;
Which, with bland words at will, she thus address'd:
  Hast thou not wonder'd, Adam, at my stay?
Thee I have miss'd, and thought it long, deprived
Thy presence; agony of love till now
Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more
Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,
The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear:
This tree is not, as we are told, a tree

Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
Opening the way; but of divine effect
To open eyes, and make them gods who taste;
And hath been tasted such: the serpent, wise,
Or not restrain'd as we, or not obeying,
Hath eaten of the fruit; and is become,
Not dead, as we are threaten'd, but thenceforth
Endued with human voice and human sense,
Reasoning to admiration; and with me
Persuasively hath so prevail'd, that I
Have also tasted, and have also found
The effects to correspond: opener mine eyes,
Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,
And growing up to godhead; which for thee
Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.
For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss;
Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.
Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot
May join us, equal joy, as equal love;
Lest, thou not tasting, different degree
Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
Deity for thee, when fate will not permit.
Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told;
But in her cheek distemper flushing glow'd.
On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard
The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,
Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd;
From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
Down dropp'd, and all the faded roses shed:
Speechless he stood and pale; till thus at length
First to himself he inward silence broke:
O fairest of creation, last and best
Of all God's works! creature, in whom excell'd
Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd,
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost,
Defaced, deflower'd, and now to death devote!
Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress
The strict forbiddance? how to violate
The sacred fruit forbidden? Some cursed fraud
Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown;
And me with thee hath ruin'd: for with thee
Certain my resolution is to die.
How can I live without thee? how forego
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly join'd,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn[p]?

[p] *Woods forlorn.*

How vastly expressive are these words of Adam's tenderness and affection for Eve;

Should God create another Eve, and I
Another rib afford; yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart: no, no! I feel
The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.
So having said, as one from sad dismay
Recomforted, and after thoughts disturb'd
Submitting to what seem'd remediless,
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turn'd:
Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve,
And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared,
Had it been only coveting to eye
That sacred fruit, sacred to abstinence;
Much more to taste it, under ban to touch.
But past who can recall, or done undo?
Not God omnipotent, nor fate: yet so
Perhaps thou shalt not die[q]; perhaps the fact
Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit,
Profaned first by the serpent, by him first
Made common, and unhallow'd, ere our taste:
Nor yet on him found deadly; he yet lives;
Lives, as thou said'st, and gains to live, as man,
Higher degree of life: inducement strong
To us, as likely tasting to attain
Proportional ascent; which cannot be
But to be gods, or angels, demigods.
Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
Us his prime creatures, dignified so high,
Set over all his works; which in our fall,
For us created, needs with us must fail,
Dependent made; so God shall uncreate,
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose;
Not well conceived of God, who, though his power
Creation could repeat, yet would be loth
Us to abolish, lest the adversary
Triumph, and say,—Fickle their state, whom God
Most favours; who can please him long? Me first
He ruin'd, now mankind; whom will he next?—
Matter of scorn, not to be given the foe.
However, I with thee have fix'd my lot,
Certain to undergo like doom: if death

as they imply that the mere imagination of losing her had already converted the sweets of Paradise into the horrors of a desolate wilderness!—Thyer.

[q] *Perhaps thou shalt not die.*

How just a picture does Milton here give us of the natural imbecility of the human mind, and its aptness to be warped into false judgments and reasoning, by passion and inclination!—Thyer.

Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
So forcible within my heart I feel
The bond of nature draw me to my own;
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine:
Our state cannot be sever'd; we are one,
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.
So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied:
O glorious trial of exceeding love,
Illustrious evidence, example high!
Engaging me to emulate; but, short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
Adam? from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof
This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,
Shall separate us, link'd in love so dear,
To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;
Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,
Direct, or by occasion) hath presented
This happy trial of thy love, which else
So eminently never had been known.
Were it I thought death menaced would ensue
This my attempt, I would sustain alone
The worst, and not persuade thee; rather die
Deserted than oblige thee with a fact
Pernicious to thy peace; chiefly, assured
Remarkably so late of thy so true,
So faithful, love unequall'd: but I feel
Far otherwise the event; not death, but life
Augmented, open'd eyes, new hopes, new joys,
Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
Hath touch'd my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.
On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
And fear of death deliver to the winds.
So saying, she embraced him, and for joy
Tenderly wept; much won, that he his love
Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur
Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.
In recompense (for such compliance bad
Such recompense best merits) from the bough
She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat,
Against his better knowledge; not deceived[r],

[r] *Not deceived.*

According to the historical relation of Moses, he did not plead for himself that he was deceived, the excuse of Eve cheated by the serpent; but rather enticed and persuaded by her. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree,

But fondly overcome with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;
Sky lour'd, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original: while Adam took no thought,
Eating his fill; nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass fear'd, the more to soothe
Him with her loved society; that now,
As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings,
Wherewith to scorn the earth: but that false fruit
Far other operation first display'd,
Carnal desire inflaming: he on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn;
Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move:
  Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
And elegant, of sapience no small part;
Since to each meaning savour we apply,
And palate call judicious: I the praise
Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purvey'd.
Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstain'd
From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
True relish, tasting; if such pleasure be
In things to us forbidden, it might be wish'd,
For this one tree had been forbidden ten.
But come, so well refresh'd, now let us play,
As meet is, after such delicious fare;
For never did thy beauty, since the day
I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorn'd
With all perfections, so inflame my sense
With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever; bounty of this virtuous tree!
  So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of amorous intent; well understood
Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
Her hand he seized; and to a shady bank,
Thick over-head with verdant roof embower'd,
He led her nothing loth: flowers were the couch,
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
And hyacinth; earth's freshest, softest lap.
There they their fill of love and love's disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
The solace of their sin; till dewy sleep

and I did eat," Gen. iii. 12. Whence St. Paul, "Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression," 1 Tim. ii. 14. Overcome with female charms, which the holy page styles "hearkening unto the voice of his wife," Gen. iii. 17.

Oppress'd them, wearied with their amorous play.
Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
That with exhilarating vapour bland
About their spirits had play'd, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhaled; and grosser sleep,
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
Encumber'd, now had left them; up they rose
As from unrest; and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how open'd, and their minds
How darken'd; innocence, that as a veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone;
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honour, from about them, naked left
To guilty shame: he cover'd, but his robe
Uncover'd more. So rose the Danite strong,
Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap
Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked
Shorn of his strength; they destitute and bare
Of all their virtue: silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute:
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abash'd,
At length gave utterance to these words constrain'd:
  O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
To that false worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit man's voice; true in our fall,
False in our promised rising; since our eyes
Open'd we find indeed, and find we know
Both good and evil; good lost, and evil got:
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know;
Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store,
Ev'n shame, the last of evils: of the first
Be sure then. How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze
Insufferably bright. Oh, might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscured; where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening! cover me, ye pines![*]

[*] *Cover me, ye pines.*

This beautifully poetical address of Adam to the pines and cedars to shelter him from the face of God and angel must be referred to Scripture; and we cannot doubt that Milton here has taken his general idea from the description of the end of the world and the day of wrath, in the Revelation: "And the kings of the earth and the great men

Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more!
But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
What best may for the present serve to hide
The parts of each from other, that seem most
To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen;
Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves together sew'd,
And girded on our loins, may cover round
Those middle parts; that this new-comer, Shame,
There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.
So counsel'd he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood; where soon they choose
The fig-tree[t], not that kind for fruit renown'd;
But such as at this day, to Indians known,
In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother-tree, a pillar'd shade
High over-arch'd, and echoing walks between:
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade: those leaves
They gather'd, broad as Amazonian targe;
And, with what skill they had, together sew'd,
To gird their waist; vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame! Oh, how unlike
To that first naked glory! Such of late
Columbus found the American, so girt
With feather'd cincture; naked else, and wild
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
Cover'd, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep; nor only tears
Rain'd at their eyes, but high winds worse within
Began to rise; high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord; and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once

hid themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17.—DUNSTER.

[t] *The fig-tree.*

Instead of a variety of references to books,—a remote satisfaction; the reader will compare at once the passage from Pliny, which has received the advantage of Milton's versification:—

"Ficus ibi exilia poma habet. Ipsa se semper-ferens, vastis diffunditur ramis: quorum pondera adeo in terram curvantur, at annuo spatio infigantur, novamque sibi propaginem faciant circa parentem in orbes quodam opere topiario. Intra sepem eam æstivant pastores, opacam pariter et munitam vallo arboris, decora specie subter intuenti, proculve fornicato ambitu. Foliorum latitudo peltæ effigiem Amazonicæ habet."—Plinius, lib. xii. 5, de ficu Indica.

And full of peace, now tost and turbulent;
For understanding ruled not, and the will
Heard not her lore; both in subjection now
To sensual appetite, who from beneath
Usurping over sovran reason claim'd
Superiour sway: from thus distemper'd breast,
Adam, estranged in look and alter'd style,
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renew'd:
  Would thou hadst hearken'd to my words, and stay'd
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
I know not whence possess'd thee; we had then
Remain'd still happy: not, as now, despoil'd
Of all our good; shamed, naked, miserable!
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.
  To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve:
What words have pass'd thy lips, Adam, severe?
Imputest thou that to my default, or will
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happen'd, thou being by,
Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discern'd
Fraud in the serpent, speaking as he spake;
No ground of enmity between us known,
Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm.
Was I to have never parted from thy side?
As good have grown there still a lifeless rib.
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger, as thou said'st?
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay;
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fix'd in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgress'd, nor thou with me.
  To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:
Is this the love, is this the recompense
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve? express'd
Immutable, when thou wert lost, not I;
Who might have lived, and joy'd immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
And am I now upbraided as the cause
Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint; what could I more?
I warn'd thee, I admonish'd thee, foretold
The danger and the lurking enemy
That lay in wait; beyond this, had been force;
And force upon free will hath here no place.

But confidence then bore thee on; secure
Either to meet no danger, or to find
Matter of glorious trial: and perhaps
I also err'd, in overmuch admiring
What seem'd in thee so perfect, that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee; but I rue
That errour now, which is become my crime,
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him, who, to worth in woman[u] overtrusting,
Lets her will rule: restraint she will not brook;
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
She first his weak indulgence will accuse.
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
And of their vain contest appear'd no end.

[u] *Worth in woman.*

I have corrected this inaccuracy, and inserted *woman* in the present text; not in deference to the assertion of Dr. Bentley, or the inclination of Bishop Newton; but to the more decisive authority of Milton himself, in another passage of the same book; where Adam is also the speaker:—

for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote. v. 232, et seq.

Both passages speak alike of woman in the abstract; both alike use the same pronoun, "her," to this antecedent.

The ninth book is raised upon that brief account in Scripture, wherein we are told that the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field; that he tempted the woman to eat of the forbidden tree; that she was overcome by this temptation; and that Adam followed her example. From these few particulars Milton has formed one of the most entertaining fables that invention ever produced: he has disposed of these several circumstances among so many agreeable and natural fictions of his own, that his whole story looks only like a comment upon Sacred Writ, or rather seems to be a full and complete relation of what the other is only an epitome. I have insisted the longer on this consideration, as I look upon the disposition and contrivance of the fable to be the principal beauty of the ninth book, which has more story in it, and is fuller of incidents than any other in the whole poem. Satan's traversing the globe, and still keeping within the shadow of the night, as fearing to be discovered by the angel of the sun, who had before detected him, is one of those beautiful imaginations with which he introduces this his second series of adventures. Having examined the nature of every creature, and found out one who was the most proper for his purpose, he again returns to Paradise; and, to avoid discovery, sinks by night with a river that ran under the garden, and rises up again through a fountain that issued from it by the Tree of Life. The poet, who, as we have before taken notice, speaks as little as possible in his own person, and after the example of Homer, fills every part of his work with manners and characters, introduces a soliloquy from this infernal agent, who was thus restless in the destruction of man. He is then described as gliding through the garden, under the resemblance of a mist, in order to find out that creature in which he designed to tempt our first parents. This description has something in it very poetical and surprising.

The author afterwards gives us a description of the morning, which is wonderfully suitable to a divine poem, and peculiar to that first season of nature. He represents the earth, before it was cursed, as a great altar, breathing out its incense from all parts, and sending up a pleasant savour to the nostrils of its Creator; to which he adds a noble idea of Adam and Eve as offering their morning worship, and filling up the universal concert of praise and adoration.

The dispute which follows between our two first parents, is represented with great art: it proceeds from a difference of judgment, not of passion; and is managed with reason, not with heat; it is such a dispute as we may suppose might have happened in Paradise had man continued happy and innocent. There is a great delicacy in the moralities which are interspersed in Adam's discourse, and which the most ordinary reader cannot but take notice of; that force of love which the father of mankind so finely describes in the eighth book, shows itself here in many fine instances:—as in those regards he casts towards Eve at her parting from him; in his impatience and amusement during her absence; but particularly in that passionate speech, where, seeing her irrecoverably lost, he resolves to perish with her, rather than to live without her, v. 904, &c. The beginning of this speech, and the preparation to it, are animated with the same spirit as the conclusion.

The subtle wiles which are put in practice by the tempter, when he found Eve separated from her husband,—the many pleasing images of nature which are intermixed in this part of the story, with its gradual and regular progress to the fatal catastrophe,—are so very remarkable, that it would be superfluous to point out their respective beauties.

I have avoided mentioning any particular similitudes in my remarks on this great work, because I have given a general account of them in my observations on the first book: there is one, however, in this part of the poem, which I shall here notice, as it is not only very beautiful, but the closest of any in the whole poem; I mean that where the serpent is described as rolling forward in all his pride, animated by the evil spirit, and conducting Eve to her destruction, while Adam was at too great a distance from her to give her his assistance.

That secret intoxication of pleasure, with all those transient flushings of guilt and joy, which the poet represents in our first parents upon their eating the forbidden fruit, to those flaggings of spirit, damps of sorrow, and mutual accusations which succeed it, are conceived with a wonderful imagination, and described in very natural sentiments. When Dido, in the fourth Æneid, yielded to that fatal temptation which ruined her, Virgil tells us, the earth trembled, the heavens were filled with flashes of lightning, and the nymphs howled upon the mountain tops. Milton, in the same poetical spirit, has described all nature as disturbed upon Eve's eating the forbidden fruit: upon Adam's falling into the same guilt, the whole creation appears a second time in convulsions. As all nature suffered by the guilt of our first parents, these symptoms of trouble and consternation are wonderfully imagined, not only as prodigies, but as marks of her sympathising in the fall of man.—ADDISON.

BOOK X.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

CERTAINLY Milton has in this book shown to an amazing extent all the variety of his powers in striking contrast with each other: the sublimity of the celestial persons; the gigantic wickedness of the infernal; the mingled excellence and human infirmities of Adam and Eve; and the shadowy and terrific beings of Sin and Death. Of any other poet, the imagination would have been exhausted in the preceding books: in Milton, it still gathers strength, and grows bolder and bolder, and darts with more expanded wings. When Sin and Death deserted the gates of hell, and made their way to earth, the conception and expression of all the circumstances are of a supernatural force.

For my part, I see no adequate reason why the whole of an epic poem should not consist of allegorical or shadowy beings; nor do I see even why they should not be mixed in action with those imaginary persons who represent realities; certainly the poetical parts of the Scriptures everywhere embody such shadowy existences.

Sin and Death might have flown through the air from hell to earth as shadowy personifications, without the aid of a bridge of matter, but this ought not to have prohibited the poet from picturing a bridge of matter if his imagination led him to that device. It was intended to typify the facility of access contrived by Sin and Death from hell to this terrestrial globe, not only for themselves, but for all their ministers and innumerable followers. The moral is obvious: what is intended to be conveyed is, though figuratively told, in perfect concurrence with our faith, instead of shocking it. We must cut away all the most impressive parts of poetry, if we do not allow these figurative inventions.

It may be admitted that it requires a rich mind duly to enjoy and appreciate these grand and spiritual agencies; they therefore who have cold conceptions, eagerly catch hold of these censures to justify their own insensibility; they *can* understand illustrations drawn from objects daily in solid forms before their eyes. But it is not only in the description of forms and actions that the bard has a strength and brilliance so wonderful: he is equally happy in the sentiments he attributes to each personage: all speak in their own distinct characters, with a justness and individuality which meet instant recognition, and waken an indescribable assent and pleasure. Thus Adam and Eve, when they know the displeasure of the Almighty, and are overwhelmed with fear and remorse, each express themselves according to their separate casts of mind, disposition, and circumstances: their moans are deeply affecting. To my taste, this book is much more lofty and much more pathetic than the ninth: as the subject was much more difficult, so it is executed with much more miraculous vigour and originality.

The representation of the manner in which God's judgment upon earth was executed by changing the seasons, putting the elements into contest, and deteriorating all nature, fills the imagination with wonder, and brings out new touches of poetry with a magical effect.

In others the poetical language seems a sort of cover,—a gilding; in Milton it is a part and essence of the thought. The primary image is poetical; the poetry does not depend upon the illustration; though sometimes there is a union, and it is thus to be found in both: but if the secondary has it, the first never wants it.

The characters of Milton are all compound and reflective; they are not merely intuitive like Shakspeare's: they have therefore more of that invention which is comprehensive, and requires study to appreciate. The whole of 'Paradise Lost' from beginning to end is part of one inseparable web; and however beautiful detached

parts may appear, not half their genius or wisdom can be felt or understood except in connexion with the whole. There are congruities and allusions in every word, which are lost, unless we attend to their essential relation to the whole scheme.

It is this intensity and inseparability of the web which are among the miracles of Milton's execution. Grace, strength, splendour, depth, all depend upon its unity. As no texture was ever before produced out of particles drawn from such an extent of space, and such a variety of mines; so the amalgamation of all into one perfect whole is the more astonishing.

Such is the erudition applied to this most wonderful work, that nothing less than the conjoined attempts of a whole body of learned men for a century have been able to explain its inexhaustible allusions; and even yet the task is not completed.

Little comparative invention is required for a fable drawn from history, observation, and experience; but Milton had to travel into other worlds of higher natures, and superior powers: he had to imagine on subjects out of the human track, not only according to probability, but limited both by authority and religious awe, where nothing wanton, fantastic, or unsolemn could be endured.

It is more easy to make the fictitious resemblance of an ideal conception agreeable and brilliant at first, than of a severe abstract truth. After deep study and long examination, we find the superior grandeur and merit of the latter. Such was the praise to which Milton aspired, and to which he is entitled. There are vapours in the sky, shot through by golden beams, at which we gaze for a moment with delight; but which dissolve away, and leave us disappointed in the dark: there are *ignes fatui* raised by some idle wanderings of nature's conflicts, which have neither heat, nor solace, nor nutriment. That which finds a clear and responsive mirror in the intellect is truth.

There are certain predispositions in the human mind to poetical visionariness: we love to view things more fair or more majestic than reality presents. By imagination we can see into the souls of characters far better than cold history instructs us: we behold thus all the loveliness of beauty, all the mightiness of strength, all the splendour of mind, all the tenderness of the heart, in their essences. But this high creativeness can only be produced by one of those purest of beings who is endued with the positive faculties of the Muse.

The spacious firmament on high,
And all the blue ethereal sky,

when pointed out by a poet's hand, fill with astonishment and devotion those who before beheld them dimly and with indifference. Thus the charms of the new world, in which Adam and Eve were placed, were unheeded till they were delineated by Milton's song.

But it is in the associations that the grand art of impressiveness lies. In this tenth book the story is as thickly wove as it is grand.

ARGUMENT.

MAN'S transgression known, the guardian-angels forsake Paradise, and return up to heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressours; who descends and gives sentence accordingly; then in pity clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at the gates of hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new world, and the sin by man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in hell, but to follow Satan their sire up to the place of man: to make the way easier from hell to this world to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made; then, preparing for earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandæmonium; in full assembly relates with boasting his success against man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed with himself also suddenly into serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise; then deluded with a show of the forbidden tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death; God foretells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things; but for the present commands his angels to

make several alterations in the heavens and the elements. Adam more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolement of Eve; she persists, and at length appeases him: then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways, which he approves not; but conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the serpent; and exhorts her with him to seek peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication.

MEANWHILE the heinous and despiteful act
Of Satan done in Paradise, and how
He, in the serpent, had perverted Eve,
Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,
Was known in heaven; for what can 'scape the eye
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
Omniscient? who, in all things wise and just,
Hinder'd not Satan to attempt the mind
Of man, with strength entire, and free-will arm'd
Complete to have discover'd and repulsed
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
For still they knew, and ought to have still remember'd,
The high injunction not to taste that fruit,
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying,
Incurr'd (what could they less?) the penalty;
And, manifold in sin[a], deserved to fall.
Up into heaven from Paradise in haste
The angelic guards ascended, mute and sad
For man; for of his state by this they knew,
Much wondering how the subtle fiend had stolen
Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news
From earth arrived at heaven-gate, displeased
All were who heard; dim sadness did not spare[b]
That time celestial visages, yet, mix'd
With pity, violated not their bliss.
About the new arrived in multitudes
The ethereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befel: they towards the throne supreme,
Accountable, made haste, to make appear,
With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,
And easily approved; when the Most High
Eternal Father, from his secret cloud
Amidst, in thunder utter'd thus his voice:
  Assembled angels, and ye powers return'd

[a] *And, manifold in sin.*

Every sin is complicated in some degree: and the divines, especially those of Milton's communion, reckon up several sins as included in this one act of eating the forbidden fruit; namely, pride, uxoriousness, wicked curiosity, infidelity, disobedience, &c.; so that, for such complicated guilt, he deserved to fall from his happy state in Paradise.—NEWTON.

[b] *Dim sadness did not spare.*

What a just and noble idea does Milton here give us of the blessedness of a benevolent temper; and how proper, at the same time, to obviate the objection that might be made of sadness dwelling in heavenly spirits!—THYER.

From unsuccessful charge, be not dismay'd,
Nor troubled at these tidings from the earth,
Which your sincerest care could not prevent;
Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
When first this tempter cross'd the gulf from hell.
I told ye then he should prevail, and speed
On his bad errand; man should be seduced,
And flatter'd out of all, believing lies
Against his Maker; no decree of mine
Concurring, to necessitate his fall,
Or touch with lightest moment of impulse
His free-will, to her own inclining left
In even scale. But fallen he is; and now
What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass
On his transgression, death denounced that day?
Which he presumes already vain and void,
Because not yet inflicted[c], as he fear'd,
By some immediate stroke; but soon shall find
Forbearance no acquittance, ere day end.
Justice shall not return as bounty scorn'd.
But whom send I to judge them? whom but thee,
Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferr'd[d]
All judgment, whether in heaven, or earth, or hell.
Easy it may be seen that I intend
Mercy colleague with justice[e], sending thee,
Man's friend, his Mediator, his design'd
Both ransom and Redeemer voluntary,
And destined man himself to judge man fallen.
  So spake the Father; and, unfolding bright
Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son
Blazed forth unclouded deity: he full
Resplendent all his Father manifest
Express'd, and thus divinely answer'd mild:
  Father Eternal, thine is to decree;
Mine, both in heaven and earth, to do thy will
Supreme: that thou in me, thy Son beloved,
Mayst ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
On earth these thy transgressours; but thou know'st,
Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,
When time shall be; for so I undertook
Before thee; and, not repenting, this obtain
Of right, that I may mitigate their doom

[c] *Because not yet inflicted.*

So, in Eccles. viii. 11:—"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."—TODD.

[d] *To thee I have transferr'd.*

From John v. 22:—"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."—HUME.

[e] *Colleague with justice.*

See Psalm lxxxv. 10.

On me derived: yet I shall temper so
Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most
Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.
Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none
Are to behold the judgment but the judged,
Those two; the third best absent is condemn'd.
Convict by flight, and rebel to all law:
Conviction to the serpent none belongs.
  Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose
Of high collateral glory. Him thrones, and powers,
Princedoms, and dominations ministrant,
Accompanied to heaven-gate; from whence
Eden, and all the coast, in prospect lay.
Down he descended straight; the speed of gods
Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes wing'd.
Now was the sun in western cadence low[f]
From noon; and gentle airs, due at their hour,
To fan the earth now waked, and usher in
The evening cool; when he, from wrath more cool,
Came the mild Judge and Intercessour both,
To sentence man. The voice of God they heard
Now walking in the garden, by soft winds
Brought to their ears while day declined; they heard,
And from his presence hid themselves among
The thickest trees, both man and wife; till God
Approaching, thus to Adam call'd aloud:
  Where art thou, Adam[g], wont with joy to meet
My coming seen far off? I miss thee here;
Not pleased, thus entertain'd with solitude,
Where obvious duty erewhile appear'd unsought:
Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth!
  He came; and with him Eve, more loth, though first
To offend; discountenanced both and discomposed:
Love was not in their looks, either to God
Or to each other; but apparent guilt,
And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
Anger, and obstinacy, and hate and guile.
Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answer'd brief:
  I heard thee in the garden; and of thy voice
Afraid, being naked, hid myself. To whom
The gracious Judge without revile replied:

[f] *The sun in western cadence low.*

This beautiful description is founded upon this verse:—"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden," Gen. iii. 8.—NEWTON.

[g] *Where art thou, Adam?*

See Gen. iii. 9, &c. It is curious to observe how the poet paraphrases and enlarges upon the divine historian.—NEWTON.

My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not fear'd,
But still rejoiced; how is it now become
So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked, who
Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the tree,
Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?
To whom thus Adam sore beset replied:
O heaven! in evil strait[h] this day I stand
Before my Judge; either to undergo
Myself the total crime, or to accuse
My other self, the partner of my life;
Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
I should conceal, and not expose to blame
By my complaint: but strict necessity
Subdues me, and calamitous constraint;
Lest on my head both sin and punishment,
However insupportable, be all
Devolved; though, should I hold my peace, yet thou
Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.
This woman[i], whom thou madest to be my help,
And gavest me as thy perfect gift, so good,
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
That from her hand I could suspect no ill;
And what she did, whatever in itself,
Her doing seem'd to justify the deed;
She gave me of the tree, and I did eat.
To whom the Sovran Presence thus replied:
Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
Before his voice? or was she made thy guide,
Superior, or but equal, that to her
Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,
And for thee, whose perfection far excell'd
Hers in all real dignity? Adorn'd
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts
Were such, as under government well seem'd:

[h] *O heaven! in evil strait.*

Nothing shows Milton's judgment more than keeping to the very words of Scripture, as far as possible, in the preceding conference between God and Adam; but the poet thought himself here obliged to deviate from his rule of adhering strictly to the sacred text, in order to keep up some dignity in Adam, by putting an apology into his mouth for the accusation that was to follow.—STILLINGFLEET.

[i] *This woman.*

Milton still preserves all that is in Scripture, though he intermixes other things that were likely enough to have been said and done. Adam speaks of Eve much in the same strain as he had done before to the angel, b. viii. 549:—

What she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, &c.;

and his unwillingness to accuse his wife, and yet the necessity of doing it, are finely imagined.—NEWTON.

Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part
And person, hadst thou known thyself aright.
So having said, he thus to Eve in few:
Say, woman, what[j] is this which thou hast done?
To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelm'd,
Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge
Bold or loquacious, thus abash'd replied:
The serpent me beguiled, and I did eat.
Which when the Lord God heard, without delay
To judgment he proceeded on the accused
Serpent, though brute; unable to transfer
The guilt on him who made him instrument
Of mischief, and polluted from the end
Of his creation: justly then accursed,
As vitiated in nature: more to know
Concern'd not man (since he no farther knew),
Nor alter'd his offence; yet God at last
To Satan, first in sin, his doom applied;
Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best:
And on the serpent thus his curse let fall:
Because thou hast done this[k], thou art accursed
Above all cattle, each beast of the field:
Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,
And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.
Between thee and the woman I will put
Enmity; and between thine and her seed:
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.
So spake this oracle, then verified[l],
When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall[m], like lightning, down from heaven,
Prince of the air; then, rising from his grave,
Spoil'd principalities and powers, triumph'd
In open show; and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the air,

[j] *Say, woman, what?*

See Gen. iii. 13.

[k] *Because thou hast done this.*

See Gen. iii. 14.

[l] *Oracle, then verified.*

Here is a manifest indication, that, when Milton wrote this passage, he thought Paradise was chiefly regained at our Saviour's resurrection. This would have been a copious and sublime subject for a second poem. The wonders then to be described, would have erected even an ordinary poet's genius; and, in episodes, he might have introduced his conception, birth, miracles, and all the history of his administration while on earth: and I much grieve, that, instead of this, he should choose for the argument of his "Paradise Regained" the fourth chapter of Luke, the temptation in the wilderness:—a dry, barren, and narrow ground to build an epic poem on. In that work he has amplified his scanty materials to a surprising dignity; but yet, being cramped down by a wrong choice, without the expected applause.—BENTLEY.

[m] *Saw Satan fall.*

See Luke x. 18, in ver. 184; Ephes. ii. 2; Col. ii. 15; Psalm lxviii. 18; Ephes. iv. 8; Rom. xvi. 20.—TODD.

The realm itself of Satan, long usurp'd;
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet;
Ev'n he, who now foretold his fatal bruise:
And to the woman[n] thus his sentence turn'd:
  Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception; children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth; and to thy husband's will
Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule.
  On Adam last thus judgment he pronounced:
Because thou hast hearken'd to the voice of thy wife,
And eaten of the tree, concerning which
I charged thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat thereof;
Cursed is the ground for thy sake: thou in sorrow
Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life;
Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth
Unbid; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field:
In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
Till thou return unto the ground; for thou
Out of the ground wast taken; know thy birth;
For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return.
  So judged he man, both Judge and Saviour sent;
And the instant stroke of death, denounced that day,
Removed far off: then, pitying how they stood
Before him naked to the air, that now
Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume[o],
As when he wash'd his servants' feet; so now,
As father of his family, he clad
Their nakedness with skins of beasts[p], or slain,
Or as the snake with youthful coat repaid;
And thought not much to clothe his enemies:
Nor he their outward only with the skins
Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness[q]
Arraying, cover'd from his Father's sight.
To him with swift ascent he up return'd,
Into his blissful bosom reassumed,
In glory, as of old: to him appeased,
All, though all-knowing, what had pass'd with man
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.
  Meanwhile, ere thus was sinn'd and judged on earth,
Within the gates of hell sat Sin and Death,

[n] *And to the woman.*

Milton is exact in reporting the sentences pronounced on our first parents. See Gen. iii. 16–19.—NEWTON.

[o] *Servant to assume.*

See Phil. ii. 7; John xiii. 5.

[p] *Skins of beasts.*

See Gen. iii. 21.

[q] *Robe of righteousness.*

See Isaiah lxi. 10.

In counterview within the gates, that now
Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
Far into Chaos, since the fiend pass'd through,
Sin opening; who thus now to Death began:
  O son, why sit we here each other viewing
Idly, while Satan, our great authour, thrives
In other worlds, and happier seat provides
For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be
But that success attends him; if mishap,
Ere this he had return'd, with fury driven
By his avengers; since no place like this
Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.
Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
Wings growing, and dominion given me large,
Beyond this deep: whatever draws me on,
Or sympathy, or some connatural force,
Powerful at greatest distance to unite
With secret amity things of like kind,
By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade
Inseparable, must with me along;
For Death from Sin no power can separate.
But, lest the difficulty of passing back
Stay his return perhaps over this gulf
Impassable, impervious; let us try
Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine
Not unagreeable, to found a path
Over this main from hell to that new world,
Where Satan now prevails; a monument
Of merit high to all the infernal host,
Easing their passage hence, for intercourse,
Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
By this new-felt attraction and instinct.
  Whom thus the meagre shadow answer'd soon:
Go, whither fate, and inclination strong,
Lead thee; I shall not lag behind, nor err
The way, thou leading; such a scent I draw
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
The savour of death from all things that there live;
Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid.
  So saying, with delight he snuff'd the smell
Of mortal change on earth. As when a flock [r]
Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
Against the day of battel, to a field,

[r] *As when a flock.*

Dr. Newton thinks that Lucan's description of the ravenous birds that followed the Roman camp, and scented the battle of Pharsalia, gave occasion to Milton's simile. See Pharsal. viii. 831.—TODD.

Where armies lie encamp'd, come flying, lured
With scent of living carcases design'd
For death, the following day, in bloody fight:
So scented the grim feature, and upturn'd
His nostril wide into the murky air;
Sagacious of his quarry from so far.
Then both from out hell-gates, into the waste
Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
Flew diverse; and with power (their power was great)
Hovering upon the waters, what they met
Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
Tost up and down, together crowded drove,
From each side shoaling towards the mouth of hell:
As when two polar winds[s], blowing adverse
Upon the Cronian sea, together drive
Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way
Beyond Petsora eastward, to the rich
Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil
Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
As with a trident, smote, and fix'd as firm
As Delos, floating once; the rest his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move;
And with asphaltic slime, broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of hell the gather'd beach
They fasten'd, and the mole immense wrought on,
Over the foaming deep high-arch'd, a bridge
Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
Immoveable of this now fenceless world,
Forfeit to Death: from hence a passage broad,
Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to hell.
So, if great things to small may be compared,
Xerxes[t], the liberty of Greece to yoke,

[s] *As when two polar winds.*

Sin and Death, flying into different parts of Chaos, and driving all the matter they meet there in shoals towards the mouth of hell, are compared to two polar winds, north and south, *blowing adverse upon the Cronian sea*, the northern frozen sea ("A Thule unius diei navigatione mare concretum a nonnullis Cronium appellantur." Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 16); and driving together mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way, the north-east passage as it is called, which so many have attempted to discover; *beyond Petsora eastward*, the most north-eastern province of Muscovy; *to the rich Cathaian coast*, Cathay, or Catay, a country of Asia, and the northern part of China.—NEWTON.

[t] *So —— Xerxes.*

This simile is very exact and beautiful; as Sin and Death built a bridge over Chaos to subdue and enslave mankind; so Xerxes, to bring the free states of Greece under his yoke, came from Susa, the residence of the Persian monarchs, called Memnonia by Herodotus; and, building a bridge over the Hellespont, the narrow sea by Constantinople that divides Europe from Asia, to march his large army over it, "Europe with Asia join'd, and scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves;" alluding to the madness of Xerxes, in ordering the sea to be whipped for the loss of some of his ships: "indignant waves, scorning and raging to be so confined:" as Virgil says, Æn. viii. 728: "Pontem indignatus Araxes:" and Georg. ii. 162:

Atque indignatum magnis stridoribus æquor.—NEWTON.

From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
Came to the sea; and, over Hellespont
Bridging his way, Europe with Asia join'd,
And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves.
Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
Pontifical, a ridge of pendent rock,
Over the vex'd abyss, following the track
Of Satan to the self-same place where he
First lighted from his wing, and landed safe
From out of Chaos, to the outside bare
Of this round world: with pins of adamant
And chains they made all fast; too fast they made
And durable! And now in little space
The confines met of empyrean heaven,
And of this world; and, on the left hand, hell
With long reach interposed; three several ways
In sight, to each of these three places led.
And now their way to earth they had descried,
To Paradise first tending; when, behold!
Satan, in likeness of an angel bright,
Betwixt the Centaur[u] and the Scorpion steering
His zenith, while the sun in Aries rose:
Disguised he came; but those his children dear
Their parent soon discern'd, though in disguise.
He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk
Into the wood fast by; and changing shape,
To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded
Upon her husband; saw their shame that sought
Vain covertures; but when he saw descend
The Son of God to judge them, terrified
He fled; not hoping to escape, but shun
The present; fearing, guilty, what his wrath
Might suddenly inflict; that past, return'd
By night, and listening where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,
Thence gather'd his own doom; which understood
Not instant, but of future time, with joy
And tidings fraught, to hell he now return'd:
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhoped
Met, who to meet him came, his offspring dear.

[u] *Betwixt the Centaur.*

Alluding to a ship steering her course betwixt two islands: so Satan directed his way between these two signs of the zodiac upwards: the zenith is overhead.—RICHARDSON.

Satan, to avoid being discovered (as he had been before, b. iv. 569, &c.) by Uriel, regent of the sun, takes care to keep at as great a distance as possible; and therefore, while the sun rose in Aries, he steers his course directly upwards, *betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion*, two constellations which lay in a quite different part of the heavens from Aries.—NEWTON.

Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight
Of that stupendous bridge his joy increased.
Long he admiring stood; till Sin, his fair
Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke:
  O parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
Thy trophies! which thou view'st as not thine own:
Thou art their authour, and prime architect:
For I no sooner in my heart divined
(My heart, which by a secret harmony
Still moves with thine, join'd in connexion sweet)
That thou on earth hadst prosper'd, which thy looks
Now also evidence, but straight I felt,
Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt
That I must after thee, with this thy son;
Such fatal consequence unites us three.
Hell could no longer hold us in our bounds,
Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
Detain from following thy illustrious track:
Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined
Within hell-gates till now; thou hast impower'd
To fortify thus far, and overlay,
With this portentous bridge, the dark abyss.
Thine now is all the world; thy virtue hath won
What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gain'd
With odds what war hath lost; and fully avenged
Our foil in heaven: here thou shalt monarch reign,
There didst not; there let him still victor sway,
As battel hath adjudged; from this new world
Retiring, by his own doom alienated;
And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,
His quadrature, from thy orbicular world;
Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne.
  Whom thus the prince of darkness answer'd glad:
Fair daughter, and thou son and grandchild both;
High proof ye now have given to be the race
Of Satan (for I glory in the name,
Antagonist of heaven's Almighty King);
Amply have merited of me, of all
The infernal empire, that so near heaven's door
Triumphal with triumphal act have met,
Mine, with this glorious work; and made one realm,
Hell and this world, one realm, one continent
Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore,—while I
Descend through darkness, on your road with ease,
To my associate powers, them to acquaint
With these successes, and with them rejoice;—
You two this way, among these numerous orbs,
All yours, right down to Paradise descend;

There dwell and reign in bliss; thence on the earth
Dominion exercise and in the air,
Chiefly on man, sole lord of all declared:
Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
My substitutes I send ye, and create
Plenipotent on earth, of matchless might
Issuing from me; on your joint vigour now
My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.
If your joint power prevail, the affairs of hell
No detriment need fear: go, and be strong!
  So saying, he dismiss'd them; they with speed
Their course through thickest constellations held,
Spreading their bane[v]; the blasted stars look'd wan[w];
And planets, planet-struck[x], real eclipse
Then suffer'd. The other way Satan went down
The causey to hell-gate: on either side
Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaim'd,
And with rebounding surge[y] the bars assail'd,
That scorn'd his indignation: through the gate,
Wide open and unguarded, Satan pass'd,
And all about found desolate; for those,
Appointed to sit there, had left their charge,
Flown to the upper world; the rest were all
Far to the inland retired, about the walls
Of Pandæmonium, city and proud seat
Of Lucifer; so by allusion call'd
Of that bright star to Satan paragon'd:
There kept their watch the legions, while the grand
In council sat, solicitous what chance

[v] *Spreading their bane.*

Ovid's description of the journey of Envy to Athens, and Milton's of Sin and Death to Paradise, have a great resemblance; but whatever Milton imitates, he adds a greatness to it; as in this place, he alters Ovid's flowers, herbs, people, and cities, to stars, planets, and worlds.—Ovid, Met. ii. 793:—

> Quacumque ingreditur, florentia proterit arva,
> Exurique herbas et summa cacumina carpit:
> Afflatuque suo populos, urbesque, domosque
> Polluit.

See an "Essay upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients," p. 42.—NEWTON.

[w] *Blasted stars look'd wan.*

So Tasso, speaking of Alecto, Gier. Lib. c. ix. st. 1:—

> Si parte, e dove passai campi lieti
> Secca, e pallido il sol si fà repente.—THYER.

[x] *Planets, planet-struck.*

We say of a thing, when it is blasted and withered, that it is *planet-struck;* and that is now applied to the planets themselves. And what a sublime idea doth it give us of the devastations of Sin and Death!—NEWTON.

[y] *And with rebounding surge.*

Virg. Georg. ii. 161:—

> Lucrinoque addita claustra,
> Atque indignatum magnis stridoribus æquor.—NEWTON.

Might intercept their emperour sent; so he
Departing gave command, and they observed.
As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,
By Astracan[a], over the snowy plains,
Retires; or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns
Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
To Tauris or Casbeen; so these, the late
Heaven-banish'd host, left desert utmost hell
Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch
Round their metropolis; and now expecting
Each hour their great adventurer, from the search
Of foreign worlds: he through the midst[a] unmark'd,
In show plebeian angel militant
Of lowest order, pass'd; and from the door
Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
Ascended his high throne; which, under state
Of richest texture spread, at the upper end
Was placed in regal lustre. Down awhile
He sat, and round about him saw, unseen:
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
And shape star-bright appear'd, or brighter; clad
With what permissive glory since his fall
Was left him, or false glitter: all amazed
At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng
Bent their aspect, and whom they wish'd beheld,
Their mighty chief return'd: loud was the acclaim;
Forth rush'd in haste the great consulting peers,
Raised from their dark divan, and with like joy
Congratulant approach'd him; who with hand
Silence, and with these words attention, won:
  Thrones, dominations[b], princedoms, virtues, powers;

[a] *By Astracan.*

A considerable part of the Czar's dominions, formerly a Tartarian kingdom, with capital city of the same name, near the mouth of the river Volga, at its fall into the Caspian sea; *or Bactrian Sophi*, the Persian emperor, named of Bactria, one of the greatest and richest provinces of Persia; *from the horns of Turkish crescent*, his Turkish enemies, who bear the crescent in their ensigns; *leaves all waste beyond the realm of Aladule*, the Greater Armenia, called Aladule of its last king, Aladules, slain by Selymus the First, *in his retreat to Tauris*, a great city of Persia; now called Ecbatana, some time in the hands of the Turks, but retaken in 1603 by Abas, King of Persia; *or Casbeen*, one of the greatest cities of Persia, towards the Caspian sea, where the Persian monarchs made their residence after the loss of Tauris, from which it is distant sixty-five German miles to the south-east.—HUME.

[a] *He through the midst.*

This account of Satan's passing unmarked through the midst of the angels; and ascending his throne invisible; and seeing there about him, himself unseen; and then bursting forth, as from a cloud, in glory; seems to be copied from a like adventure of Æneas, Virg. Æn. i. 439.—NEWTON.

[b] *Thrones, dominations.*

It is common with Homer to make use of the same verse several times, and especially at the beginning of his speeches.—NEWTON.

For in possession such, not only of right,
I call ye, and declare ye now; returned
Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
Triumphant out of this infernal pit
Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,
And dungeon of our tyrant: now possess,
As lords, a spacious world, to our native heaven
Little inferiour, by my adventure hard
With peril great achieved. Long were to tell
What I have done, what suffer'd; with what pain
Voyaged the unreal, vast, unbounded deep
Of horrible confusion; over which
By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,
To expedite your glorious march; but I
Toil'd out my uncouth passage, forced to ride
The untractable abyss, plunged in the womb
Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild;
That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed
My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
Protesting fate supreme; thence how I found
The new-created world, which fame in heaven
Long had foretold, a fabric wonderful
Of absolute perfection! therein man
Placed in a Paradise, by our exile
Made happy: him by fraud I have seduced
From his Creator; and, the more to increase
Your wonder, with an apple; he, thereat
Offended, worth your laughter! hath given up
Both his beloved man and all his world,
To Sin and Death a prey; and so to us,
Without our hazard, labour, or alarm,
To range in, and to dwell, and over man
To rule, as over all he should have ruled.
True is, me also he hath judged, or rather
Me not, but the brute serpent, in whose shape
Man I deceived: that which to me belongs
Is enmity, which he will put between
Me and mankind; I am to bruise his heel;
His seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head.
A world who would not purchase with a bruise,
Or much more grievous pain? Ye have the account
Of my performance: what remains, ye gods,
But up, and enter now into full bliss?
So having said, awhile he stood expecting
Their universal shout, and high applause,
To fill his ear: when, contrary, he hears
On all sides, from innumerable tongues,
A dismal universal hiss, the sound
Of public scorn: he wonder'd, but not long

Had leisure, wondering at himself now more:
His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare;
His arms clung to his ribs; his legs entwining
Each other, till supplanted down he fell[c]
A monstrous serpent[d] on his belly prone,
Reluctant, but in vain; a greater Power
Now ruled him, punish'd in the shape he sinn'd,
According to his doom. He would have spoke,
But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue
To forked tongue; for now were all transform'd
Alike, to serpents all, as accessories
To his bold riot: dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarming now
With complicated monsters head and tail,
Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbæna dire,
Cerastes horn'd, hydrus, and elops drear,
And dipsas (not so thick swarm'd once the soil
Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the isle
Ophiusa); but still greatest he the midst,
Now dragon grown, larger than whom the sun
Ingender'd in the Pythian vale on slime,
Huge Python, and his power no less he seem'd
Above the rest still to retain. They all
Him follow'd, issuing forth to the open field,
Where all yet left of that revolted rout,
Heaven-fallen, in station stood or just array;
Sublime with expectation when to see
In triumph issuing forth their glorious chief.
They saw, but other sight indeed! a crowd
Of ugly serpents; horrour on them fell,
And horrid sympathy; for what they saw,
They felt themselves, now changing: down their arms,
Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast;
And the dire hiss renew'd, and the dire form
Catch'd, by contagion; like in punishment,
As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant
Turn'd to exploding hiss, triumph to shame
Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood

[c] *Supplanted down he fell.*

We may observe here a singular beauty and elegance in Milton's language, and that is his using words in their strict and literal sense, which are commonly applied to a metaphorical meaning; whereby he gives peculiar force to his expressions, and the literal meaning appears more new and striking than the metaphor itself: we have an instance of this in the word *supplanted*, which is derived from the Latin "supplanto," to trip up one's heels, or overthrow, "a planta pedis subtus emota:" and there are abundance of other examples in several parts of this work; but let it suffice to have taken notice of it here once for all.—NEWTON.

[d] *A monstrous serpent.*

Milton, in describing Satan's transformation into a serpent, had no doubt in mind the transformation of Cadmus in the fourth book of the Metamorphoses, to which he had alluded before in b. ix. 905. See Ovid, Met. iv. 575.—NEWTON.

A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
His will who reigns above, to aggravate
Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that
Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
Used by the tempter: on that prospect strange
Their earnest eyes they fix'd, imagining
For one forbidden tree a multitude
Now risen, to work them farther woe or shame;
Yet, parch'd with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain;
But on they roll'd in heaps, and, up the trees
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
That curl'd Megæra. Greedily they pluck'd
The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
Near that bituminous lake[e] where Sodom flamed;
This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceived: they fondly thinking to allay
Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
Chew'd bitter ashes, which the offended taste
With spattering noise rejected: oft they assay'd,
Hunger and thirst constraining; drugg'd as oft,
With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws,
With soot and cinders fill'd; so oft they fell
Into the same illusion, not as man
Whom they triumph'd once lapsed[f]. Thus were they plagued,
And worn with famine long and ceaseless hiss,
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed;
Yearly enjoin'd, some say, to undergo
This annual humbling certain number'd days,
To dash their pride and joy for man seduced.
However, some tradition they dispersed
Among the heathen of their purchase got;
And fabled how the serpent, whom they call'd
Ophion, with Eurynome, the wide-
Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule

[e] *Near that bituminous lake.*

The Dead Sea, or the lake Asphaltites, so called from the bitumen which it is said to have cast up; near which Sodom and Gomorrah were situated. Josephus mentions the apples of Sodom as dissolving into ashes and smoke at the first touch: but our countrymen, Sandys and Maundrell, who visited the Holy Land, are inclined to disbelieve that such fruit existed. Cotovicus, describing Sodom, &c., positively asserts the same particulars of these apples, which the Jewish historian mentions, and to which the poet very minutely alludes: "Hinc quoque arbores illic spectes visu pulcherrimas, et poma viridantia producentes, adspectu ridentia et nitida, et quæ edendi generent spectantibus cupiditatem, sed intus favilla et cinere plena; quæ ipsa etiam, si carpas, fatiscunt, et in cinerem resolvuntur, et quasi adhuc arderent, fumum excitant." Itin. Hierosol. p. 312. See also Sir John Mandeville's Travels, ed. 1725, p. 122, where he is speaking of this delusive fruit.—TODD.

[f] *Once lapsed.*

Whom being once lapsed, they triumphed;—in opposition to themselves, who often fell into the same illusion.

Of high Olympus; thence by Saturn driven
And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived; Sin, there in power[g] before,
Once actual; now in body, and to dwell
Habitual habitant; behind her Death,
Close following, pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse[h]; to whom Sin thus began:
Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death!
What think'st thou of our empire now, though earn'd
With travail difficult? not better far,
Than still at hell's dark threshold to have sat watch,
Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half-starved?
Whom thus the sin-born monster answer'd soon:
To me, who with eternal famine pine,
Alike is hell, or Paradise, or heaven;
There best, where most with ravine I may meet:
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems[i]
To stuff this maw, this vast un-hidebound[j] corpse.
To whom the incestuous mother thus replied:
Thou therefore on these herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
Feed first; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl;
No homely morsels: and whatever thing
The scythe of Time mows down, devour unspared;
Till I, in man residing, through the race,
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect;
And season him thy last and sweetest prey.
This said, they both betook them several ways,
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
All kinds, and for destruction to mature
Sooner or later; which the Almighty seeing,
From his transcendant seat the saints among,
To those bright orders utter'd thus his voice:
See, with what heat these dogs of hell[k] advance

[g] *Sin, there in power.*

The sense is, that, before the Fall, Sin was in power, or potentially in Paradise; that once, viz., upon the Fall, it was actually there, though not bodily; but that now, upon its arrival in Paradise, it was there in body, and dwelt there as a constant inhabitant. The words, *in body*, allude to what St. Paul says, Rom. vi. 6, "that the body of sin might be destroyed."—PEARCE.

[h] *Not mounted yet*
On his pale horse.

Milton has given a fine turn to this poetical thought by saying that Death had not mounted yet on his pale horse; for, though he was to have a long and all-conquering power, he had not yet begun, neither was he for some time to put it in execution.—GREENWOOD.

[i] *Too little seems.*

Compare Prov. xxvii. 20. "Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied."—TODD.

[j] *Un-hidebound.*

Not tight-bound, as when creatures are swoln and full.—NEWTON.

[k] *Dogs of hell.*

Newton thinks some of the expressions in this description too coarse: they are

To waste and havoc yonder world, which I
So fair and good created; and had still
Kept in that state, had not the folly of man
Let in these wasteful furies, who impute
Folly to me; so doth the prince of hell
And his adherents, that with so much ease
I suffer them to enter and possess
A place so heavenly; and, conniving, seem
To gratify my scornful enemies,
That laugh, as if, transported with some fit
Of passion, I to them had quitted all,
At random yielded up to their misrule;
And know not that I call'd, and drew them thither,
My hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
Which man's polluting sin with taint hath shed
On what was pure; till, cramm'd and gorged, nigh burst
With suck'd and glutted offal, at one sling
Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
Both Sin, and Death, and yawning grave[l], at last,
Through Chaos hurl'd, obstruct the mouth of hell[m]
For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
Then heaven and earth renew'd shall be made pure
To sanctity, that shall receive no stain:
Till then, the curse pronounced on both precedes.
He ended, and the heavenly audience loud
Sung halleluiah, as the sound of seas,
Through multitude that sung: Just are thy ways[n],
Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works:
Who can extenuate thee? Next, to the Son,
Destined Restorer of mankind, by whom
New heaven and earth shall to the ages rise,
Or down from heaven descend. Such was their song;

particularly so from ver. 630, but they have a worse fault; they are the expressions of mere human indignation and scorn; and are therefore unsuitable to the Deity. The difficulty, however, of assigning to the divine displeasure terms of language according with his purity, as well as anger, is hardly surmountable.

[l] *Death, and yawning grave.*

Death and the grave, meaning the same, is a pleonasm; which, adding force and energy, and calling forth the attention, is a beauty common in the best writers; but not for that reason only has Milton used it: the Scripture has thus joined Death and the grave, Hos. xiii. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 55; and Rev. xx. 13; where the word rendered 'hell' signifies also the grave.—RICHARDSON.

[m] *Obstruct the mouth of hell.*

Mr. Boyd, the learned and elegant translator of Dante's "Inferno," is of opinion that the sublime imagination of Dante,—"that the earthquake which attended the crucifixion, overthrew the infernal ramparts, and obstructed the way to hell,"—gave the hint to Milton, that Sin and Death first built the infernal bridge, whose partial ruin at least was the consequence of the resurrection. See the "Inferno," c. xxiii.—TODD.

[n] *Just are thy ways.*

The same song, says Dr. Newton, that they are represented singing in Revelations, Rev. xv. 3; xvi. 7; as in the foregoing passage, which is remarked also by Addison, he alludes to Rev. xix. 6.—TODD.

While the Creator, calling forth by name
His mighty angels, gave them several charge,
As sorted best with present things. The sun
Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
As might affect the earth with cold and heat
Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call
Decrepit winter; from the south to bring
Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc moon
Her office they prescribed; to the other five
Their planetary motions, and aspects,
In sextile [o], square, and trine, and opposite,
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
In synod unbenign; and taught the fix'd
Their influence malignant when to shower,
Which of them rising with the sun, or falling,
Should prove tempestuous: to the winds they set
Their corners, when with bluster to confound
Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
With terrour through the dark aëreal hall.
Some say, he bid his angels [p] turn askance
The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more,
From the sun's axle; they with labour push'd
Oblique the centric globe: some say, the sun
Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
Like-distant breadth to Taurus with the seven
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,
Up to the tropic Crab: thence down amain
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,
As deep as Capricorn; to bring in change
Of seasons to each clime; else had the spring
Perpetual smiled on earth with vernant flowers
Equal in days and nights, except to those
Beyond the polar circles; to them day
Had unbenighted shone; while the low sun,
To recompense his distance, in their sight
Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
Or east or west; which had forbid the snow
From cold Estotiland [q], and south as far

[o] *In sextile.*

If an unnecessary ostentation of learning be, as Addison observes, one of Milton's faults; it certainly must be an aggravation of it, where he not only introduces but countenances, such enthusiastic, unphilosophical notions, as this jargon of the astrologers is made up of.—THYER.

[p] *Bid his angels.*

It was "eternal spring," b. iv. 268, before the Fall; and he is now accounting for the change of seasons after the Fall, and mentions the two famous hypotheses.—NEWTON.

[q] *Estotiland.*

A great tract of land in the north of America, towards the arctic circle and Hudson's Bay; as Magellan is a country in South America, which, together with its straits, took their name of Ferdinandus Magellanus, a Portuguese, who in the year 1520 first discovered them.—HUME.

Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit,
The sun, as from Thyestean banquet[r], turn'd
His course intended; else, how had the world
Inhabited, though sinless, more than now,
Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
These changes in the heavens, though slow, produced
Like change on sea and land; sideral blast,
Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
Corrupt and pestilent: now from the north
Of Norumbega[s], and the Samoed shore,
Bursting their brazen dungeon, arm'd with ice,
And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,
Boreas, and Cæcias[t], and Argestes loud,
And Thrascias, rend the woods, and seas upturn;
With adverse blast upturns them from the south
Notus, and Afer black with thunderous clouds
From Serraliona: thwart of these, as fierce,
Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds,
Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
Sirocco and Libecchio. Thus began
Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,
Daughter of Sin, among the irrational
Death introduced, through fierce antipathy:
Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,
And fish with fish: to graze the herb[u] all leaving,
Devour'd each other; nor stood much in awe
Of man, but fled him; or, with countenance grim,
Glared on him passing. These were from without[v]

[r] *Thyestean banquet.*

The bloody banquet given by Atreus to his brother Thyestes, at which the flesh of his own children was served up among the festive meats; an implacable resentment of an adulterous injury. This feast was the master and leading horror of classical antiquity; it drew retributive vengeance upon the head of Agamemnon, the son of Atreus; followed by the parricide of Orestes: but all these horrors are summed up in the prophetic ravings of Cassandra, as given by the daring Æschylus in his "Agamemnon."

[s] *Of Norumbega.*

Norumbega, a province of the northern Armenia; Samoieda, in the north-east of Muscovy, upon the frozen sea.—HUME.

[t] *Boreas and Cæcias.*

In this account of the winds, is a needless ostentation of learning, and a strange mixture of ancient and modern Latin and Italian names together. These are the foibles and weak parts of our author.—NEWTON.

These "foibles and weak parts" of Milton may not be equally apparent to all critics. He gratified his ear indeed with words of truly epic force and dignity; but it is best at least to explain such as are unusual to the English reader. The Levant and the Ponent (Eurus and Zephyr) are the east and west winds; "their lateral noise, Sirocco and Libecchio," are the south-east and south-west.

[u] *To graze the herb.*

Whether Milton's notion was right or not, is another question; but certainly it was his notion, that beast, fowl, and fish grazed the herb before the Fall.—NEWTON.

[v] *These were from without.*

The transition to Adam here is very easy and natural, and cannot fail of pleasing

The growing miseries, which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandon'd, but worse felt within;
And, in a troubled sea of passion tost,
Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:
  O miserable of happy! is this the end
Of this new glorious world, and me so late
The glory of that glory? who now become
Accursed of blessed, hide me from the face
Of God, whom to behold was then my highth
Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end
The misery; I deserved it, and would bear
My own deservings; but this will not serve:
All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard
Delightfully, Increase and multiply;
Now death to hear! for what can I increase
Or multiply, but curses on my head?
Who of all ages to succeed, but, feeling
The evil on him brought by me, will curse
My head? Ill fare our ancestor impure!
For this we may thank Adam! but his thanks
Shall be the execration: so, besides
Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
Shall with a fierce reflux on me rebound;
On me, as on their natural centre, light
Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys
Of Paradise, dear-bought with lasting woes!
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay [w]
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me, or here place
In this delicious garden? As my will
Concurr'd not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust;
Desirous to resign and render back
All I received; unable to perform
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
Thy justice seems: yet, to say truth, too late
I thus contest; then should have been refused
Those terms, whatever, when they were proposed:

the reader. We have seen great alterations produced in nature, and it is now time to see how Adam is affected with them; and whether the disorders *within* are not even worse than those *without*.—NEWTON.

[w] *From my clay.*

See Isaiah's animated expostulation, xlv. 9:—"Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?"—TODD.

Thou didst[x] accept them; wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil the conditions? and, though God
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son
Prove disobedient, and, reproved, retort,
Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not:
Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee
That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,
But natural necessity begot.
God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;
Thy punishment then justly is at his will.
Be it so, for I submit; his doom is fair,
That dust I am, and shall to dust return:
O welcome hour whenever! Why delays
His hand to execute what his decree
Fix'd on this day? Why do I overlive?
Why am I mock'd with death, and lengthen'd out
To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
Mortality my sentence, and be earth
Insensible! How glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap! There I should rest,
And sleep secure; his dreadful voice[y] no more
Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse
To me, and to my offspring, would torment me
With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die;
Lest that pure breath of life[z], the spirit of man
Which God inspired, cannot together perish
With this corporeal clod: then in the grave,
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living death? O thought
Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath
Of life that sinn'd; what dies but what had life
And sin? The body properly hath neither.
All of me then shall die: let this appease
The doubt, since human reach no farther knows:
For, though the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath also? Be it, man is not so,
But mortal doom'd. How can he exercise
Wrath without end on man, whom death must end?
Can he make deathless death? That were to make

[x] *Thou didst.*

The change of persons, sometimes speaking of himself in the first, and sometimes to himself in the second, is very remarkable in this speech, as well as the change of passions: and in like manner he speaks sometimes of God.—NEWTON.

[y] *His dreadful voice.*

Perhaps suggested by Job xxxvii. 5:—"God thundereth marvellously with his voice."—TODD.

[z] *That pure breath of life.*

See Gen. ii. 7.

Strange contradiction, which to God himself
Impossible is held; as argument
Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,
For anger's sake, finite to infinite,
In punish'd man, to satisfy his rigour,
Satisfied never? That were to extend
His sentence beyond dust and nature's law,
By which all causes else[a], according still
To the reception of their matter, act;
Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say
That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,
Bereaving sense, but endless misery
From this day onward; which I feel begun
Both in me, and without me; and so last
To perpetuity:—ay, me! that fear
Comes thundering[b] back with dreadful revolution
On my defenceless head; both death and I
Am found eternal, and incorporate both:
Nor I on my part single[c]; in me all
Posterity stands cursed: fair patrimony
That I must leave ye, sons! O, were I able
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!
So disinherited, how would you bless
Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind,
For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemn'd,
If guiltless! But from me what can proceed,
But all corrupt; both mind and will depraved,
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me? How can they then acquitted stand
In sight of God? Him, after all disputes,
Forced I absolve: all my evasions vain,
And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
But to my own conviction: first and last
On me, me only, as the source and spring
Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;

[a] *By which all causes else.*

All other agents act in proportion to the reception or capacity of the subject matter, and not to the utmost extent of their own power: an allusion to an axiom of the schools:—"Omne efficiens agit secundum vires recipientis, non suas."—NEWTON.

[b] *That fear*
Comes thundering.

The thought is fine as it is natural. The sinner may invent never so many arguments in favour of the annihilation and utter extinction of the soul; but, after all his subterfuges and evasions, the fear of a future state, and the dread of everlasting punishment, will still pursue him: he may put it off for a time, but it will return *with dreadful revolution;* and, let him affect what serenity and gaiety he pleases, will, notwithstanding, in the midst of it all, *come thundering back on his defenceless head.*—NEWTON.

[c] *Nor I on my part single.*

And this curse was the patrimony which he was to leave to his sons. The author had in view 2 Esdr. vii. 48:—"O thou Adam, what hast thou done? for though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee."—NEWTON.

So might the wrath! Fond wish! couldst thou support
That burden, heavier than the earth to bear;
Than all the world much heavier, though divided
With that bad woman? Thus, what thou desirest,
And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope
Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
Beyond all past example[d] and future:
To Satan only like both crime and doom.
O conscience! into what abyss of fears
And horrours hast thou driven me; out of which
I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged!
  Thus Adam to himself lamented loud,
Through the still night[e]; not now, as ere man fell,
Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air
Accompanied; with damps and dreadful gloom;
Which to his evil conscience represented
All things with double terrour: on the ground
Outstretch'd he lay, on the cold ground; and oft
Cursed his creation; death as oft accused
Of tardy execution, since denounced
The day of his offence. Why comes not death,
Said he, with one thrice-acceptable stroke
To end me? Shall truth fail to keep her word,
Justice divine not hasten to be just?
But death comes not at call; justice divine
Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers!
With other echo late I taught your shades
To answer, and resound far other song.
Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
Soft words to his fierce passion she assay'd;
But her with stern regard he thus repell'd:
  Out of my sight, thou serpent! That name best
Befits thee with him leagued, thyself as false
And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,
Like his, and colour serpentine, may show
Thy inward fraud; to warn all creatures from thee
Henceforth: lest that too heavenly form, pretended
To hellish falsehood, snare them! But for thee
I had persisted happy: had not thy pride

[d] *Beyond all past example.*

As Adam is here speaking in great agonies of mind, he aggravates his own misery, and concludes it to be greater and worse than that of the fallen angels, or all future men; as having in himself alone the source of misery for all his posterity; whereas both angels and men had only their own to bear. Satan was only like him, as being the ringleader; and this added very much to his remorse; as we read in b. i. 605.—NEWTON.

[e] *Through the still night.*

This, we conceive, must be some other night than that immediately after the Fall.—NEWTON.

And wandering vanity, when least was safe,
Rejected my forewarning, and disdain'd
Not to be trusted; longing to be seen,
Though by the devil himself, him overweening
To over-reach; but, with the serpent meeting,
Fool'd and beguiled; by him thou, I by thee,
To trust thee from my side; imagined wise,
Constant, mature, proof against all assaults;
And understood not all was but a show,
Rather than solid virtue; all but a rib
Crook'd by nature, bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinister, from me drawn;
Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
To my just number found. O! why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest heaven
With spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on earth, this fair defect
Of nature, and not fill the world at once
With men, as angels, without feminine;
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen,
And more that shall befall; innumerable
Disturbances on earth through female snares,
And strait conjunction with this sex: for either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gain'd
By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld
By parents; or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already link'd and wedlock-bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame:
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound.
  He added not, and from her turned; but Eve,
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing,
And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble; and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:
  Forsake me not thus, Adam! witness, Heaven,
What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant,
I beg, and clasp thy knees: bereave me not,
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress
My only strength and stay: forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,

Between us two let there be peace; both joining,
As join'd in injuries, one enmity
Against a foe by doom express assign'd us,
That cruel serpent: on me exercise not
Thy hatred for this misery befallen;
On me already lost, me than thyself
More miserable! both have sinn'd; but thou
Against God only, I against God and thee;
And to the place of judgment will return,
There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe;
Me, me only, just object of his ire!
  She ended weeping; and her lowly plight,
Immoveable, till peace obtain'd from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration: soon his heart relented[f]
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress;
Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,
His counsel, whom she had displeased, his aid:
As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost;
And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon:
  Unwary, and too desirous, as before
So now, of what thou know'st not, who desirest
The punishment all on thyself; alas!
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
His full wrath, whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
Could alter high decrees, I to that place
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited;
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
To me committed, and by me exposed.
But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame

[f] *Soon his heart relented.*

This picture of Eve's distress, her submissive tender address to her husband, and his generous reconcilement to her, are extremely beautiful,—I had almost said beyond anything in the whole poem; and that reader must have a very sour and unfriendly turn of mind, whose heart does not relent with Adam's, and melt into a sympathising commiseration towards the mother of mankind; so well has Milton here followed Horace's advice,—

Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi.

Milton with great depth of judgment observes, in his "Apology for Smectymnuus," that, "he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition of the best and honourablest things; and have in himself the experience and practice of all which is praiseworthy." Of the truth of which observation he himself is, I think, a shining instance in this charming scene now before us; since there is little room to doubt but that the particular beauties of it are owing to an interview of the same nature which he had with his own wife; and that he is only here describing those tender and generous sentiments which he then felt and experienced.—THYER.

Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other's burden, in our share of woe;
Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil;
A long day's dying, to augment our pain;
And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived.
To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied:
Adam, by sad experiment I know
How little weight my words with thee can find,
Found so erroneous; thence by just event
Found so unfortunate: nevertheless,
Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart,
Living or dying, from thee I will not hide
What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,
Tending to some relief[g] of our extremes,
Or end; though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
As in our evils, and of easier choice.
If care of our descent perplex us most,
Which must be born to certain woe, devour'd
By Death at last; and miserable it is,
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
Into this cursed world a woful race,
That after wretched life must be at last
Food for so foul a monster; in thy power
It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
Childless thou art, childless remain: so Death
Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two
Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.
But if thou judge it hard and difficult,
Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
From love's due rights, nuptial embraces sweet;
And with desire to languish without hope,
Before the present object languishing
With like desire; which would be misery
And torment less than none of what we dread;

[g] *Tending to some relief.*

Adam had said before, that the death denounced upon them, as far as he could see, would prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil, *a long day's dying*, and would likewise be *derived* to their posterity. Eve therefore proposes, to prevent its being *derived* to their posterity, that they should resolve to *remain childless;* or, if they found it difficult to do so, that then, to prevent *a long day's dying* to themselves and seed, at once, they should *make short*, and destroy themselves. The former method she considers as *some relief of their extremes*, the latter as *the end.* And, as Dr. Greenwood observes, Milton might possibly take the hint of putting these proposals into the mouth of Eve, from Job's wife attempting to persuade her husband in his afflictions to "curse God, and die," Job ii. 9, 10.—NEWTON.

Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free
From what we fear for both, let us make short—
Let us seek death [h]; or, he not found, supply
With our own hands his office on ourselves.
Why stand we longer shivering under fears,
That show no end but death; and have the power,
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
Destruction with destruction to destroy?
She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke off the rest; so much of death her thoughts
Had entertain'd, as dyed her cheeks with pale.
But Adam, with such counsel nothing sway'd,
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Labouring had raised; and thus to Eve replied:
Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent, than what thy mind contemns;
But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
That excellence thought in thee; and implies,
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overloved.
Or if thou covet death, as utmost end
Of misery, so thinking to evade
The penalty pronounced; doubt not but God
Hath wiselier arm'd his vengeful ire, than so
To be forestall'd; much more I fear lest death,
So snatch'd, will not exempt us from the pain
We are by doom to pay; rather, such acts
Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
To make death in us live: then let us seek
Some safer resolution, which methinks
I have in view, calling to mind with heed
Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise
The serpent's head; piteous amends! unless
Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe,
Satan; who, in the serpent, hath contrived
Against us this deceit: to crush his head
Would be revenge indeed! which will be lost
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
Resolved, as thou proposest; so our foe
Shall 'scape his punishment ordain'd, and we
Instead shall double ours upon our heads.
No more be mention'd then of violence
Against ourselves; and wilful barrenness,
That cuts us off from hope; and savours only
Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,

[h] *Let us seek death.*

Eve's speech, as Dr. Gillies observes, breathes the language of despair; Adam's the sentiments of a mind enlightened and encouraged by the Word of God.—TODD.

Reluctance against God and his just yoke
Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
And gracious temper he both heard, and judged,
Without wrath or reviling: we expected
Immediate dissolution, which we thought
Was meant by death that day; when, lo! to thee
Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,
And bringing forth; soon recompensed with joy,
Fruit of thy womb: on me the curse aslope
Glanced on the ground; with labour I must earn
My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse:
My labour will sustain me; and, lest cold
Or heat should injure us, his timely care
Hath, unbesought, provided; and his hands
Clothed us, unworthy, pitying while he judged;
How much more, if we pray him, will his ear
Be open, and his heart to pity incline,
And teach us farther by what means to shun
The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail and snow!
Which now the sky, with various face, begins
To show us in this mountain; while the winds
Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
Of these fair-spreading trees; which bids us seek
Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
Our limbs benumb'd, ere this diurnal star
Leave cold the night, how we his gather'd beams
Reflected may with matter sere foment;
Or, by collision of two bodies, grind
The air attrite to fire; as late the clouds
Justling, or push'd with winds, rude in their shock,
Tine the slant lightning; whose thwart flame, driven down,
Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine,
And sends a comfortable heat from far,
Which might supply the sun: such fire to use,
And what may else be remedy or cure
To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,
He will instruct us praying, and of grace
Beseeching him; so as we need not fear
To pass commodiously this life, sustain'd
By him with many comforts, till we end
In dust, our final rest and native home.
What better can we do, than, to the place
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent; and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg; with tears
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn

From his displeasure; in whose look serene,
When angry most he seem'd and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?
So spake our father penitent; nor Eve
Felt less remorse: they, forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell
Before him reverent; and both confess'd
Humbly their faults, and pardon begg'd; with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.

As Addison's remarks on this book are longer than usual, I am compelled to abridge them.

He remarks, that this tenth book contains a greater number of persons in it than any other in the whole poem; and that here are introduced all who had any concern in the action: these he divides into the celestial, the infernal, the human, and the imaginary persons. The first are very finely laid together in the beginning of this book. Satan's first appearance in the assembly of fallen angels is worked up with circumstances which give a delightful suspense to the reader; but there is no incident in the whole poem which does this more than the transformation of the whole audience, that follows the account their leader gives them of his expedition. The unexpected hiss, which arises in this episode; the dimensions and bulk of Satan, with the annual change which the spirits are supposed to undergo, are circumstances very striking. The beauty of the diction too is remarkable in this whole episode. Milton's skill is nowhere more shown than in conducting the parts of Adam and Eve.

The imaginary persons are Sin and Death. This allegory is one of the finest compositions of genius; but Addison deems it not agreeable to the nature of an epic poem. Homer and Virgil, he says, are full of imaginary persons, who are very beautiful when they are shown without being engaged in any series of action: but when such persons are introduced as principal actors, and engaged in a series of adventures, they take too much upon them, and are by no means proper for an heroic poem, which ought to appear credible in its principal parts. "I cannot forbear therefore thinking," he adds, "that Sin and Death are as improper agents in a work of this nature, as Strength and Necessity in one of the tragedies of Æschylus, who represented those two persons nailing down Prometheus to a rock; for which he has been justly censured by the greatest critics."



The Departure from Paradise

BOOK XI.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

ADDISON observes, that this eleventh book of 'Paradise Lost' is not generally reckoned among the most shining books of the poem. How is it possible that every book where the splendour is so excessive, should blaze equally? Probably there is less invention in this book; but the descriptive parts are not less powerful, nor less important, instructive, and awful in their topics. The Deluge was a trial of strength with the Ancients, since it forms so important a feature in Ovid's poems. So far as there is invention in this book, it lies in the selection of circumstances, in picturesque epithets, and in moral, political, and religious reflections: its intellectual compass is vast and stupendous. Such a view opened upon Adam of the fate of his posterity, could only be conceived and comprehended by the splendid force of the poetical eye of Milton. Wonderful as is the liveliness and truth of shape and tint of each part, still the greater wonder is in the united brilliance of the whole.

It is truly said, that Milton everywhere follows the great ancients, and improves upon them: he despises all the petty gildings and artifices, which are so much boasted in modern poetry. His object is, to convey images and ideas—not words; and the plainer the words, so that they do not disgrace the thought, the better! He would never sacrifice the force of the language to the metre. The mark of this is, that when he had occasion to use the terms of the Scripture, he would not derange them for the sake of the rhythm.

On that which pleases us individually, without consulting the feelings and opinions of others, we cannot rely: but when what delights us has made the same impression on gifted persons of all ages, and under all different circumstances, then we may be sure that its charms are intrinsic, and such as it is important to bring out, and render more impressive. Thus Milton is full of imagery, which makes the spell of Homer and Virgil.

There are those who think that poetry is not of the essence of intellectual cultivation: they think so because they have no idea of the nature of true poetry; without which there can be no due conception of the wonders and charms of the creation.

Smooth verses are indeed but childish amusements to the ear, which would be better fed by common and unpolished sounds conveying useful knowledge through the sense to the mind.

ARGUMENT.

THE Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them: God accepts them, but declares they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of cherubim to dispossess them; but first to reveal to Adam future things; Michael's coming down. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs; he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him; the angel denounces their departure; Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits: the angel leads him up to a high hill; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the flood.

THUS they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood,
Praying; for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh

Regenerate grow instead; that sighs now breathed[a]
Unutterable; which the Spirit of prayer
Inspired, and wing'd for heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory: yet their port[b]
Not of mean suitors; nor important less
Seem'd their petition, than when the ancient pair
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drown'd, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout. To heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor miss'd the way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they pass'd
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then clad
With incense[c], where the golden altar fumed,
By their great Intercessour, came in sight
Before the Father's throne: them the glad Son
Presenting, thus to intercede began:
  See, Father, what first-fruits on earth are sprung
From thy implanted grace in man; these sighs
And prayers, which in this golden censer, mix'd
With incense, I thy priest before thee bring;
Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed
Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees
Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen
From innocence. Now therefore bend thine ear
To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute:
Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
Interpret for him; me, his Advocate
And propitiation; all his works on me,
Good or not good, ingraft; my merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
Accept me; and, in me, from these receive
The smell of peace toward mankind: let him live
Before thee reconciled, at least his days

[a] *Sighs now breathed.*

See Rom. viii. 26:—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—HUME.

[b] *Yet their port.*

The poet could not have thought of a more apt similitude to illustrate his subject (than that of Deucalion and Pyrrha), and he has plainly fetched it from Ovid, Met. i. 318, &c. Milton has been often censured for his frequent allusions to the heathen mythology, and for mixing fables with sacred truths: but it may be observed in favour of him, that what he borrows from the heathen mythology, he commonly applies only by way of similitude; and a similitude from thence may illustrate his subject as well as from anything else.—NEWTON.

Ovid, who was a favourite with Milton, might be so, among other reasons, from so many of his subjects being in a certain degree founded on Scripture, or at least having a palpable relation thereto; as the creation, deluge, foreshowing of the destruction of the world by fire, &c.—DUNSTER.

[c] *With incense.*

See Ps. cxli. 2:—"Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense."—TODD.

Number'd, though sad; till death, his doom (which I
To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse),
To better life shall yield him; where with me
All my redeem'd may dwell in joy and bliss;
Made one with me, as I with thee am one.
  To whom the Father, without cloud, serene:
All thy request for man, accepted Son,
Obtain; all thy request was my decree:
But, longer in that Paradise to dwell,
The law I gave to nature him forbids:
Those pure immortal elements, that know
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
Eject him, tainted now; and purge him off,
As a distemper gross, to air as gross,
And mortal food; as may dispose him best
For dissolution wrought by sin, that first
Distemper'd all things, and of incorrupt
Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts
Created him endow'd; with happiness,
And immortality: that fondly lost,
This other served but to eternize woe;
Till I provided death: so death becomes
His final remedy; and, after life,
Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
By faith and faithful works, to second life,
Waked in the renovation of the just,
Resigns him up with heaven and earth renew'd.
But let us call to synod all the bless'd,
Through heaven's wide bounds: from them I will not hide
My judgments; how with mankind I proceed,
As how with peccant angels late they saw;
And in their state, though firm, stood more confirm'd.
  He ended, and the Son gave signal high
To the bright minister that watch'd: he blew
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps
When God descended, and perhaps once more,
To sound at general doom. The angelic blast
Fill'd all the regions: from their blissful bowers
Of amaranthine shade, fountain or spring,
By the waters of life, where'er they sat
In fellowships of joy, the sons of light
Hasted, resorting to the summons high;
And took their seats: till from his throne supreme
The Almighty thus pronounced his sovran will:
  O sons[d], like one of us man is become,
To know both good and evil, since his taste
Of that defended fruit; but let him boast

[d] *O sons.*
This whole speech is founded upon Gen. iii. 22-24.—NEWTON.

His knowledge of good lost, and evil got;
Happier, had it sufficed him to have known
Good by itself, and evil not at all.
He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,
My motions in him; longer than they move,
His heart I know how variable and vain,
Self-left. Lest therefore his now bolder hand
Reach also of the tree of life, and eat,
And live for ever, dream at least to live
For ever, to remove him I decree,
And send him from the garden forth to till
The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.
Michael, this my behest have thou in charge:
Take to thee from among the cherubim
Thy choice of flaming warriours, lest the fiend,
Or in behalf of man, or to invade
Vacant possession, some new trouble raise:
Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
Without remorse drive out the sinful pair;
From hallow'd ground the unholy; and denounce
To them, and to their progeny, from thence
Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint
At the sad sentence rigorously urged
(For I behold them soften'd, and with tears
Bewailing their excess), all terrour hide.
If patiently thy bidding they obey,
Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
To Adam what shall come in future days,
As I shall thee enlighten; intermix
My covenant in the woman's seed renew'd;
So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace:
And on the east side of the garden place,
Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
Cherubic watch; and of a sword the flame
Wide-waving; all approach far off to fright,
And guard all passage to the tree of life;
Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
To spirits foul, and all my trees their prey;
With whose stolen fruit man once more to delude.
  He ceased; and the archangelic power prepared
For swift descent; with him the cohort bright
Of watchful cherubim: four faces each*
Had, like a double Janus; all their shape
Spangled with eyes more numerous than those
Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse,

* *Four faces each.*

Ezekiel says that "every one had four faces," x. 14; see also x. 12:—"And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, were full of eyes round about."—Newton.

Charm'd with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed
Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile
To resalute the world with sacred light,
Leucothea[f] waked, and with fresh dews embalm'd
The earth; when Adam and first matron Eve
Had ended now their orisons, and found
Strength added from above; new hope to spring
Out of despair; joy, but with fear yet link'd;
Which thus to Eve his welcome words renew'd:
Eve, easily may faith admit, that all
The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends;
But that from us aught should ascend to Heaven
So prevalent as to concern the mind
Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,
Hard to belief may seem; yet this will prayer,
Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
Ev'n to the seat of God: for since I sought
By prayer the offended Deity to appease,
Kneel'd, and before him humbled all my heart,
Methought I saw him placable and mild
Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew
That I was heard with favour; peace return'd
Home to my breast, and to my memory
His promise, that thy seed shall bruise our foe;
Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now
Assures me that the bitterness of death
Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee,
Eve, rightly call'd mother of all mankind,
Mother of all things living, since by thee
Man is to live; and all things live for man.
To whom thus Eve, with sad demeanour, meek:
Ill-worthy I, such title should belong
To me transgressour; who, for thee ordain'd
A help, became thy snare; to me reproach
Rather belong, distrust, and all dispraise:
But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
That I, who first brought death on all, am graced
The source of life; next favourable thou,
Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsafest,
Far other name deserving. But the field
To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,
Though after sleepless night: for see! the morn,
All unconcern'd with our unrest, begins

[f] *Leucothea.*

The white goddess, as the name in Greek imports: the same with Matuta in Latin. Matuta is the early morning, that ushers in the Aurora rosy with the sunbeams, according to Lucretius, v. 655; and from Matuta is derived matutinus, "early in the morning." This is the last morning in the poem; the morning of the fatal day wherein our first parents were expelled out of Paradise.—NEWTON.

Her rosy progress smiling: let us forth;
I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoin'd
Laborious till day droop: while here we dwell,
What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks?
Here let us live, though in fallen state, content.
  So spake, so wish'd, much-humbled Eve; but fate
Subscribed not: nature first gave signs, impress'd
On bird, beast, air; air suddenly eclipsed,
After short blush of morn: nigh in her sight
The bird of Jove, stoop'd from his aery tour,
Two birds of gayest plume[g] before him drove;
Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,
First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,
Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind:
Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight.
Adam observed; and with his eye the chase
Pursuing, not unmoved, to Eve thus spake:
  O Eve, some farther change awaits us nigh,
Which Heaven by these mute signs in nature shows
Forerunners of his purpose; or to warn
Us, haply too secure of our discharge
From penalty, because from death released
Some days: how long, and what till then our life,
Who knows? or more than this, that we are dust,
And thither must return, and be no more?
Why else this double object in our sight,
Of flight pursued in the air, and o'er the ground,
One way the self-same hour? why in the east
Darkness ere day's mid-course, and morning-light
More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
And slow descends with something heavenly fraught?
He err'd not; for by this the heavenly bands
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt;
A glorious apparition, had not doubt
And carnal fear that day dimm'd Adam's eye.
Not that more glorious[h], when the angels met

[g] *Two birds of gayest plume.*

Such omens are not unusual in the poets; see Virg. Æn. i. 393; and Æn. xii. 247. But these omens have a singular beauty here, as they show the change that is going to be made in the condition of Adam and Eve; and nothing could be invented more apposite and proper for this purpose;—an eagle pursuing two beautiful birds, and a lion chasing a fine hart and hind; and both to the eastern gate of Paradise; as Adam and Eve were to be driven out by the angel at that gate.—NEWTON.

These two incidents are indeed inimitably beautiful and affecting.

[h] *Not that more glorious.*

That was not a more glorious apparition of the angels, which appeared to Jacob in Mahanaim, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2; nor that which appeared on the flaming mount in Dothan,

Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
The field pavilion'd with his guardians bright;
Nor that, which on the flaming mount appear'd
In Dothan, cover'd with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who to surprise
One man, assassin-like, had levied war,
War unproclaim'd[i]. The princely hierarch
In their bright stand there left his powers, to seize
Possession of the garden: he alone,
To find where Adam shelter'd, took his way,
Not unperceived of Adam; who to Eve,
While the great visitant approach'd, thus spake:
  Eve, now expect great tidings, which perhaps
Of us will soon determine, or impose
New laws to be observed: for I descry,
From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
One of the heavenly host; and, by his gait,
None of the meanest: some great potentate,
Or of the thrones above; such majesty
Invests him coming: yet not terrible,
That I should fear; nor sociably mild,
As Raphael, that I should much confide;
But solemn and sublime; whom, not to offend,
With reverence I must meet, and thou retire.
  He ended; and the archangel soon drew nigh,
Not in his shape celestial, but as man
Clad to meet man: over his lucid arms
A military vest of purple flow'd,
Livelier than Melibœan[j], or the grain
Of Serra, worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce; Iris had dipt the woof:
His starry helm unbuckled show'd him prime
In manhood where youth ended: by his side,
As in a glistering zodiac, hung the sword,
Satan's dire dread; and in his hand the spear.
Adam bow'd low: he, kingly, from his state
Inclined not, but his coming thus declared:
  Adam, Heaven's high behest no preface needs:
Sufficient that thy prayers are heard; and Death,

against the king of Syria, when he levied war against a single man, not like a generous enemy, but, like a base assassin, endeavoured to take him by surprise; namely, Elisha, for having disclosed the designs of the king of Syria to the king of Israel, 2 Kings vi. 13, &c.—NEWTON.

[i] *War unproclaim'd.*

The severe censure on this makes me fancy that Milton hinted at the war with Holland, which broke out in 1664, when we surprised and took the Dutch Bordeaux fleet before war was proclaimed; which the Whigs much exclaimed against.—WARBURTON.

[j] *Livelier than Melibœan.*

Melibœa, a city of Thessaly, famous for its dyeing the noblest purple. *Serra,* the dye of Tyre.—HUME.

Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
Defeated of his seizure many days,
Given thee of grace; wherein thou mayst repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
Mayst cover: well may then thy Lord, appeased,
Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim;
But longer in this Paradise to dwell
Permits not: to remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the garden forth, to till
The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil.
He added not; for Adam, at the news
Heart-struck, with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,
That all his senses bound: Eve, who unseen,
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discover'd soon the place of her retire:
O unexpected stroke, worse than of death!
Must I thus leave thee[k], Paradise? thus leave
Thee, native soil! these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of gods? where I had hope to spend,
Quiet though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names!
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?
Thee lastly, nuptial bower! by me adorn'd
With what to sight or smell was sweet! from thee
How shall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower world, to this obscure
And wild? how shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustom'd to immortal fruits?
Whom thus the angel interrupted mild:
Lament not, Eve; but patiently resign
What justly thou hast lost; nor set thy heart,
Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine:
Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes
Thy husband; him to follow thou art bound:
Where he abides, think there thy native soil.
Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp
Recovering, and his scatter'd spirits return'd,
To Michael thus his humble words address'd:
Celestial, whether among the thrones, or named
Of them the highest; for such of shape may seem

[k] *Must I thus leave thee?*

These sentiments of Eve exceed, both in pathos and variety, the farewell of Philoctetes to his cave, which Milton probably had in view. Sophoc. Philoc. v. 1487; ed. P. Stephan.

There is nothing in all poetry more beautiful and affecting than this passage.

Prince above princes! gently hast thou told
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
And in performing end us; what besides
Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring;
Departure from this happy place, our sweet
Recess, and only consolation left
Familiar to our eyes: all places else
Inhospitable appear, and desolate;
Nor knowing us, nor known: and, if by prayer
Incessant I could hope to change the will
Of Him who all things can, I would not cease
To weary him with my assiduous cries:
But prayer against his absolute decree
No more avails than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth:
Therefore to his great bidding I submit.
This most afflicts me; that departing hence,
As from his face I shall be hid, deprived
His blessed countenance: here I could frequent
With worship place by place where he vouchsafed
Presence Divine; and to my sons relate;—
On this mount he appear'd; under this tree
Stood visible; among these pines his voice
I heard; here with him at this fountain talk'd:—
So many grateful altars[1] I would rear
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
Of lustre from the brook, in memory
Or monument to ages; and thereon
Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers.
In yonder nether world where shall I seek
His bright appearances, or footstep trace?
For though I fled him angry, yet, recall'd
To life prolong'd and promised race, I now
Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
Of glory; and far off his steps adore.
  To whom thus Michael with regard benign:
Adam, thou know'st heaven his, and all the earth;
Not this rock only; his omnipresence fills

[1] *So many grateful altars.*

Besides the beauty of the sentiments, there seems to be a propriety in this passage which the commentators have not remarked. From the desire which mankind have had in all ages of preserving the memory of important and interesting transactions, many expedients were employed to transmit knowledge to succeeding ages, before the invention of writing: groves and altars, tombs, pillars, and heaps of stones, were the representative symbols of past transactions, and memorials to instruct posterity. Without mentioning many other particular instances, which are enumerated by different writers, we find from various parts of the book of Genesis, that the patriarchs raised altars where God had appeared to them. See ch. xii. 7, xxvi. 25.—To this custom of the primitive and patriarchal ages Milton seems to have alluded.—BISHOP BURGESS.

Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives[m],
Fomented by his virtual power and warm'd:
All the earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
No despicable gift; surmise not then
His presence to these narrow bounds confined
Of Paradise, or Eden: this had been
Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
All generations; and had hither come
From all the ends of the earth to celebrate
And reverence thee, their great progenitor.
But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
To dwell on even ground now with thy sons:
Yet doubt not but in valley and in plain,
God is, as here; and will be found alike
Present; and of his presence many a sign
Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal love, his face
Express, and of his steps the track divine.
Which that thou mayst believe, and be confirm'd
Ere thou from hence depart, know, I am sent[n]
To show thee what shall come in future days
To thee and to thy offspring: good with bad
Expect to hear, supernal grace contending
With sinfulness of men; thereby to learn
True patience, and to temper joy with fear
And pious sorrow; equally inured
By moderation either state to bear,
Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
Safest thy life, and best prepared endure
Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend
This hill; let Eve (for I have drench'd her eyes)
Here sleep below, while thou to foresight wakest;
As once thou slep'st while she to life was form'd.
To whom thus Adam gratefully replied:
Ascend; I follow thee, safe guide, the path
Thou lead'st me; and to the hand of Heaven submit,
However chastening; to the evil turn
My obvious breast; arming to overcome
By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,
If so I may attain. So both ascend
In the visions of God. It was a hill,
Of Paradise the highest; from whose top,

[m] *Every kind that lives.*

See Lucan ix. 578:—

Estne Dei sedes nisi terra, et pontus, et aer,
Et cœlum, et virtus? Superos quid quærimus ultra?
Jupiter est quodcunque vides, &c.—NEWTON.

See Jeremiah xxiii. 24. "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."—TODD.

[n] *Know, I am sent.*

See Dan. x. 11.—TODD.

The hemisphere of earth, in clearest ken,
Stretch'd out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.
Not higher that hill [o], nor wider looking round,
Whereon, for different cause, the tempter set
Our second Adam, in the wilderness;
To show him all earth's kingdoms, and their glory.
His eye might there command wherever stood
City of old or modern fame, the seat
Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls
Of Cambalu [p], seat of Cathaian Can,
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,
To Paquin of Sinæan kings; and thence
To Agra and Lahor of Great Mogul,
Down to the Golden Chersonese; or where
The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
In Hispahan; or where the Russian ksar
In Mosco; or the sultan in Bizance,
Turchestan-born: nor could his eye not ken
The empire of Negus to his utmost port
Ercoco, and the less maratim kings,
Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,
And Sofala, thought Ophir, to the realm
Of Congo, and Angola farthest south;
Or thence from Niger flood to Atlas mount,
The kingdoms of Almansor, Fez and Sus,
Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen;
On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway
The world: in spirit perhaps he also saw
Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,
And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat
Of Atabalipa; and yet unspoil'd
Guiana [q], whose great city Geryon's sons

[o] *Not higher that hill.*

Whereon the devil set our Saviour, the second man, the "last Adam," 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47; "to show him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," Matt. iv. 8. The prospects are well compared together; and the first thought of the one might probably be taken from the other: and as the one makes part of the subject of 'Paradise Lost,' so doth the other of 'Paradise Regained.'—NEWTON.

[p] *Of Cambalu.*

Thus he surveys the four different parts of the world, but, it must be confessed, more with an ostentation of learning, than with any additional beauty to the poem. But Mr. Thyer is of opinion that such little sallies of the Muse agreeably enough diversify the scene; and observes, that Tasso, whose 'Godfrey' is no very imperfect model of a regular epic poem, has in his fifteenth canto employed thirty or forty stanzas together in a description of this sort, which had no necessary connexion with his general plan.—NEWTON.

To me it appears that this long enumeration of sounding names fills the mind, though somewhat vaguely, with an infinity of stirring imagery.

[q] *Yet unspoil'd Guiana.*

I suppose Milton alluded to the many frustrated voyages which had been made in search of this golden country. If I remember right, this was the famous place that Sir Walter Raleigh was to have brought such treasures from.—THYER.

Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights[r]
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,
Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight
Had bred; then purged with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see;
And from the well of life three drops instill'd.
So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,
Ev'n to the inmost seat of mental sight,
That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,
Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced;
But him the gentle angel by the hand
Soon raised, and his attention thus recall'd:
  Adam, now ope thine eyes; and first behold
The effects, which thy original crime hath wrought
In some to spring from thee; who never touch'd
The excepted tree; nor with the snake conspired;
Nor sinn'd thy sin; yet from that sin derive
Corruption, to bring forth more violent deeds.
  His eyes he open'd, and beheld a field,
Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves
New-reap'd; the other part sheep-walks and folds:
In the midst an altar as the landmark stood
Rustic, of grassy sord: thither anon
A sweaty reaper[s] from his tillage brought
First-fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,
Uncull'd, as came to hand; a shepherd next,
More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid
The inwards and their fat, with incense strow'd,
On the cleft wood, and all due rites perform'd:
His offering soon propitious fire from heaven
Consumed with nimble glance and grateful stream;
The other's not, for his was not sincere;
Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talk'd,
Smote him into the midriff with a stone
That beat out life: he fell; and, deadly pale,
Groan'd out his soul with gushing blood effused.
Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
Dismay'd, and thus in haste to the angel cried:
  O teacher, some great mischief hath befallen
To that meek man, who well had sacrificed:
Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?
  To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied:
These two are brethren, Adam, and to come

[r] *Nobler sights.*

Nobler sights,—being not only of cities and kingdoms, but of the principal actions of men to the final consummation of all things.—NEWTON.

[s] *A sweaty reaper.*

See Gen. iv. 2.

Out of thy loins; the unjust the just hath slain,
For envy that his brother's offering found
From Heaven acceptance; but the bloody fact
Will be aveng'd; and the other's faith approved,
Lose no reward; though here thou see him die,
Rolling in dust and gore. To which our sire:
  Alas! both for the deed, and for the cause!
But have I now seen death? Is this the way
I must return to native dust? O sight
Of terrour, foul and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!
  To whom thus Michael: Death thou hast seen
In his first shape on man; but many shapes
Of death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim cave, all dismal; yet to sense
More terrible at the entrance, than within.
Some, as thou saw'st by violent stroke shall die;
By fire, flood, famine, by intemperance more
In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear; that thou mayst know
What misery the inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men. Immediately a place
Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark;
A lazar-house it seem'd; wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased; all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
Demoniac phrensy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; Despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoked
With vows, as their chief good and final hope.
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born; compassion quell'd
His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrain'd excess;
And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renew'd:
  O miserable mankind, to what fall
Degraded, to what wretched state reserved!
Better end here unborn. Why is life given
To be thus wrested from us? rather, why

Obtruded on us thus? who, if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept
Life offer'd, or soon beg to lay it down;
Glad to be so dismiss'd in peace. Can thus
The image of God in man, created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly sufferings be debased
Under inhuman pains? Why should not man,
Retaining still divine similitude
In part, from such deformities be free,
And, for his Maker's image sake, exempt?
  Their Maker's image, answer'd Michael, then
Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
To serve ungovern'd appetite; and took
His image whom they served, a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own;
Or if his likeness, by themselves defaced;
While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules
To loathsome sickness; worthily, since they
God's image did not reverence in themselves.
  I yield it just, said Adam, and submit.
But is there yet no other way, besides
These painful passages, how we may come
To death, and mix with our connatural dust?
  There is, said Michael, if thou well observe
The rule of—Not too much: by temperance taught,
In what thou eat'st and drink'st; seeking from thence
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight;
Till many years over thy head return,
So mayst thou live; till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother's lap; or be with ease
Gather'd, not harshly pluck'd; for death mature:
This is old age[t]; but then, thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty; which will change
To wither'd, weak, and gray; thy senses then,
Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,
To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth,
Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign

[t] *This is old age.*

The tender comparison here made between youth and age may receive its best illustration from another of the same nature in Shakspeare, which in all probability suggested that before us, from ver. 538 to 546 inclusive:—

Thou hast nor youth nor age;
But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both; for all thy blessed youth
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
Of palsied eld; and when thou art old and rich,
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,
To make thy riches pleasant.—*Meas. for Meas.* act iii.

A melancholy damp of cold and dry
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
The balm of life. To whom our ancestor:
  Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
Life much; bent rather, how I may be quit,
Fairest and easiest, of his cumbrous charge;
Which I must keep till my appointed day [u]
Of rendering up, and patiently attend
My dissolution. Michael replied:
  Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou livest
Live well; how long, or short, permit to Heaven:
And now prepare thee for another sight.
  He look'd and saw a spacious plain, whereon
Were tents of various hue; by some, were herds
Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
Was heard, of harp and organ; and who moved
Their stops and chords was seen; his volant touch
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
In other part stood one who, at the forge
Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass
Had melted (whether found where casual fire
Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale,
Down to the veins of earth; thence gliding hot
To some cave's mouth; or whether wash'd by stream
From under ground); the liquid ore he drain'd
Into fit moulds prepared; from which he form'd
First his own tools; then, what might else be wrought
Fusil or graven in metal. After these [v],
But on the hither side, a different sort
From the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat,
Down to the plain descended; by their guise
Just men they seem'd, and all their study bent
To worship God aright, and know his works

[u] *Appointed day.*
See Job xiv. 14.

[v] *After these.*
As being the descendants of the younger brother, *but on the hither side*, Cain having been banished into a more distant country; *a different sort*, the posterity of Seth, wholly different from that of Cain; *from the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat*, having their habitation in the mountains near Paradise; *down to the plain descended*, where the Cainites dwelt; *by their guise just men they seem'd, and all their study bent to worship God aright*, the Scripture itself speaks of them as the worshippers of the true God; *and know his works not hid*, and Josephus and other writers inform us, that they were addicted to the study of natural philosophy, and especially of astronomy; *nor those things last which might preserve*, nor was it their last care and study to know those things which might preserve *freedom and peace to men*. Though this account of the Sethites be, in the general, agreeable to Scripture; yet the particulars of their living in the mountains near Paradise, and of their descending thence into the plain, and their corrupting themselves in that manner with the daughters of Cain, Milton seems to have taken from the Oriental writers, and particularly from the annals of Eutychius.—NEWTON.

Not hid; nor those things last, which might preserve
Freedom and peace to men: they on the plain
Long had not walk'd, when from the tents, behold!
A bevy of fair women, richly gay
In gems and wanton dress; to the harp they sung
Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on.
The men, though grave, eyed them, and let their eyes
Rove without rein; till, in the amorous net
Fast caught, they liked; and each his liking chose.
And now of love they treat, till the evening star,
Love's harbinger, appear'd; then, all in heat,
They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke
Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked:
With feast and music all the tents resound.
Such happy interview, and fair event
Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,
And charming symphonies, attach'd the heart
Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,
The bent of nature; which he thus express'd:
  True opener of mine eyes, prime angel blest;
Much better seems this vision, and more hope
Of peaceful days portends, than those two past:
Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse;
Here nature seems fulfill'd in all her ends.
  To whom thus Michael: Judge not what is best
By pleasure, though to nature seeming meet;
Created as thou art, to nobler end
Holy and pure, conformity divine.
Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant, were the tents
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race
Who slew his brother; studious they appear
Of arts that polish life, inventors rare;
Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit
Taught them; but they his gifts acknowledged none.
Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;
For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good, wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise;
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye;—
To these that sober race of men*, whose lives

* *That sober race of men.*

As we read in Gen vi. 2: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose." It is now generally agreed, that this passage is to be understood of the sons of Seth, the worshippers of the true God, making matches with the idolatrous daughters of wicked Cain; and Milton puts this construction upon it here, though elsewhere he seems to give in to the old

Religious titled them the sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles
Of these fair atheists; and now swim in joy,
Ere long to swim at large; and laugh, for which
The world ere long a world of tears must weep.
  To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:
O pity and shame, that they, who to live well
Enter'd so fair, should turn aside to tread
Paths indirect, or in the midway faint!
But still I see the tenour of man's woe
Holds on the same, from woman to begin.
  From man's effeminate slackness it begins,
Said the angel, who should better hold his place
By wisdom, and superiour gifts received.
But now prepare thee for another scene.
  He look'd, and saw wide territory spread
Before him, towns, and rural works between;
Cities of men with lofty gates and towers,
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,
Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise;
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
Single or in array of battle ranged
Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood:
One way a band select from forage drives
A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
From a fat meadow-ground; or fleecy flock,
Ewes and their bleating lambs over the plain,
Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly,
But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray:
With cruel tournament the squadrons join;
Where cattle pastured late, now scatter'd lies
With carcases and arms the ensanguined field,
Deserted: others to a city strong
Lay siege, encamp'd; by battery, scale, and mine,
Assaulting: others from the wall defend
With dart and javelin, stones and sulphurous fire;
On each hand slaughter, and gigantic deeds.
In other part the sceptred heralds call
To council, in the city-gates; anon
Gray-headed men and grave, with warriours mix'd,
Assemble, and harangues are heard, but soon
In factious opposition; till at last
Of middle age one rising[x], eminent

exploded conceit of the angels becoming enamoured of the daughters of men. See b. iii. 463; and b. v. 447; and Par. Reg. b. ii. 178, &c.—NEWTON.

[x] *Of middle age one rising.*

Enoch, said to be *of middle age*, because he was translated when he was but 365 years old; a middle age then. Gen. v. 23.—RICHARDSON.

In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,
Of justice, of religion, truth, and peace,
And judgment from above: him old and young
Exploded and had seized with violent hands;
Had not a cloud descending snatch'd him thence,
Unseen amid the throng: so violence
Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,
Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.
Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
Lamenting turn'd full sad: O, what are these,
Death's ministers, not men? who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousand-fold the sin of him who slew
His brother: for of whom such massacre
Make they, but of their brethren; men of men?
But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven
Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?
  To whom thus Michael: These are the product
Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st;
Where good with bad were match'd, who of themselves
Abhor to join; and, by imprudence mix'd,
Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
Such were these giants, men of high renown;
For in those days might only shall be admired,
And valour and heroic virtue call'd.
To overcome in battel, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human glory; and for glory done
Of triumph, to be styled great conquerours,
Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods;
Destroyers rightlier call'd, and plagues of men.
Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth;
And what most merits fame in silence hid.
But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheldst
The only righteous in a world perverse,
And therefore hated, therefore so beset
With foes, for daring single to be just,
And utter odious truth, that God would come
To judge them with his saints; him the Most High,
Wrapt in a balmy cloud with winged steeds,
Did, as thou saw'st, receive, to walk with God
High in salvation, and the climes of bliss,
Exempt from death; to show thee what reward
Awaits the good, the rest what punishment;
Which now direct thine eyes, and soon behold.
  He look'd, and saw the face of things quite changed:
The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;
All now was turn'd to jollity and game,

To luxury and riot, feast and dance;
Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
Rape or adultery, where passing fair
Allured them; thence from cups to civil broils.
At length a reverend sire among them came,
And of their doings great dislike declared,
And testified against their ways: he oft
Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
Triumphs or festivals; and to them preach'd
Conversion and repentance[y], as to souls
In prison, under judgments imminent;
But all in vain: which when he saw, he ceased
Contending, and removed his tents far off:
Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk;
Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and highth;
Smear'd round with pitch; and in the side a door
Contrived; and of provisions laid in large,
For man and beast: when, lo, a wonder strange!
Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
Came sevens and pairs, and enter'd in as taught
Their order: last the sire and his three sons,
With their four wives; and God made fast the door.
Meanwhile the south wind rose, and with black wings
Wide-hovering, all the clouds together drove
From under heaven; the hills to their supply
Vapour, and exhalation, dusk and moist,
Sent up amain: and now the thicken'd sky
Like a dark ceiling stood; down rush'd the rain
Impetuous; and continued, till the earth
No more was seen: the floating vessel swum
Uplifted, and secure with peaked prow
Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else
Flood overwhelm'd, and them with all their pomp
Deep under water roll'd: sea cover'd sea,
Sea without shore; and in their palaces,
Where luxury late reign'd, sea-monsters whelp'd
And stabled; of mankind, so numerous late,
All left in one small bottom swum imbark'd.
How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation! Thee another flood,
Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drown'd,
And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently rear'd
By the angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,

[y] *Conversion and repentance.*

This account of Noah's preaching is founded chiefly on St. Peter, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20; as what follows of his desisting, when he found his preaching ineffectual, and of removing into another country, is taken from Josephus, Antiq. Jud. lib. i. c. 3.—NEWTON.

Though comfortless; as when a father mourns
His children all in view destroy'd at once;
And scarce to the angel utter'dst thus thy plaint:
  O visions ill foreseen! better had I
Lived ignorant of future; so had borne
My part of evil only, each day's lot
Enough to bear; those now, that were dispensed
The burden of many ages, on me light
At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth
Abortive, to torment me ere their being,
With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall
Him or his children; evil he may be sure,
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent;
And he the future evil shall no less
In apprehension than in substance feel
Grievous to bear: but that care now is past;
Man is not whom to warn: those few escaped
Famine and anguish will at last consume,
Wandering that watery desert: I had hope,
When violence was ceased, and war on earth,
All would have then gone well; peace would have crown'd
With length of happy days the race of man;
But I was far deceived; for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
How comes it thus? unfold, celestial guide,
And whether here the race of men will end.
  To whom thus Michael: Those, whom last thou saw'st
In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great exploits, but of true virtue void;
Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste,
Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey,
Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
Surfeit, and lust; till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
The conquer'd also, and enslaved by war,
Shall, with their freedom lost[a], all virtue lose
And fear of God; from whom their piety feign'd[a]

[a] *Freedom lost.*

Milton everywhere shows his love of liberty; and here he observes very rightly, that the loss of liberty is soon followed by the loss of all virtue and religion. There are such sentiments in several parts of his prose works, as well as in Aristotle, and other masters of politics.—NEWTON.

[a] *Piety feign'd.*

I conceive this to be unquestionably political. Milton was, it has been supposed, well aware of the *feign'd piety* of many of his own party, whom he had once considered as saints; and whose temporizing at the Restoration completed in his mind the hypocrisy of their character. Hypocrisy, it may be observed, Milton, in various parts of his poem, has branded as the most abominable of crimes.—DUNSTER.

In sharp contest of battel found no aid
Against invaders; therefore, cool'd in zeal,
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords
Shall leave them to enjoy; for the earth shall bear
More than enough, that temperance may be tried:
So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved;
Justice and temperance, truth and faith forgot;
One man except, the only son of light
In a dark age, against example good,
Against allurement, custom, and a world
Offended: fearless of reproach and scorn,
Or violence, he of their wicked ways
Shall them admonish; and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe,
And full of peace; denouncing wrath to come
On their impenitence; and shall return
Of them derided, but of God observed
The one just man alive: by his command
Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheldst,
To save himself and household, from amidst
A world devote to universal wrack.
No sooner he, with them of man and beast
Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged,
And shelter'd round, but all the cataracts
Of heaven set open on the earth shall pour
Rain, day and night; all fountains of the deep,
Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
Beyond all bounds; till inundation rise
Above the highest hills: then shall this mount
Of Paradise [b] by might of waves be moved
Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood,
With all his verdure spoil'd, and trees adrift,
Down the great river to the opening gulf,
And there take root, an island salt and bare,
The haunt of seals, and orcs [c], and sea-mews' clang;
To teach thee that God attributes to place
No sanctity [d], if none be thither brought

[b] *Then shall this mount*
Of Paradise.

It is the opinion of many learned men, that Paradise was destroyed by the deluge; and Milton describes it in a very poetical manner:—*Push'd by the horned flood:* so that it was before the flood became universal, and while it poured along like a vast river; for rivers, when they meet with anything to obstruct their passage, divide themselves, and become horned, as it were; and hence the ancients have compared them to bulls.—NEWTON.

[c] *Orcs.*

Orcs, a species of whale.—TODD.

[d] *God attributes to place*
No sanctity.

Milton omits no opportunity of lashing what he thought superstitious. These lines

By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.
And now, what farther shall ensue, behold.
He look'd, and saw the ark hull on the flood,
Which now abated; for the clouds were fled,
Driven by a keen north wind, that, blowing dry,
Wrinkled the face of deluge[e], as decay'd;
And the clear sun on his wide watery glass
Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
With soft foot towards the deep; who now had stopt
His sluices, as the heaven his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,
Fast on the top of some high mountain fix'd.
And now the tops of hills, as rocks, appear;
With clamour thence the rapid currents drive,
Towards the retreating sea, their furious tide.
Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies;
And, after him, the surer messenger,
A dove, sent forth once and again to spy
Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light:
The second time returning, in his bill,
An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign:
Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
The ancient sire descends, with all his train:
Then with uplifted hands, and eyes devout,
Grateful to heaven, over his head beholds
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
Conspicuous with three listed colours gay,
Betokening peace from God, and covenant new:
Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
Greatly rejoiced; and thus his joy broke forth:

may serve as one instance; and I think he plainly here alludes to the manner of consecrating churches used by Archbishop Laud, which was prodigiously clamoured against by people of our author's way of thinking, as superstitious and popish.—THYER.

[e] *Wrinkled the face of deluge.*

The circumstances of this description of the abating of the flood are few, but selected with great judgment, and expressed with no less spirit and beauty. In this respect, it must be owned, Milton greatly excels the Italians, who are generally too prolix in their descriptions, and think they have never said enough while anything remains unsaid. When once enough is said to excite in the reader's mind a proper idea of what the poet is representing, whatever is added, however beautiful, serves only to tease the fancy, instead of pleasing it; and rather cools than improves that glow of pleasure which arises in the mind upon its first contemplation of any surprising scene of nature well painted out.—THYEB.

Again I have to observe, that Mr. Addison's remarks upon the book before us are similar to such as are to be found in the notes of subsequent commentators already copied: it is probable that the originality lay with Addison, who, not having produced them detached, but as parts of one critique, has given them in a more popular form. Still, when the matter of them is so anticipated, I must forbear to repeat them at length: I shall, however, notice them in a summary way. He observes, that the

O thou, who future things canst represent
As present, heavenly instructor! I revive
At this last sight; assured that man shall live,
With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
Far less I now lament for one whole world
Of wicked sons destroy'd, than I rejoice
For one man found so perfect, and so just,
That God vouchsafes to raise another world
From him, and all his anger to forget.
But say, what mean those colour'd streaks in heaven
Distended, as the brow of God appeased?
Or serve they, as a flowery verge, to bind
The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
Lest it again dissolve, and shower the earth?
To whom the archangel: Dextrously thou aim'st;
So willingly doth God remit his ire,
Though late repenting him of man depraved;
Grieved at his heart, when looking down he saw
The whole earth fill'd with violence, and all flesh
Corrupting each their way; yet, those removed,
Such grace shall one just man find in his sight,
That he relents, not to blot out mankind;
And makes a covenant never to destroy
The earth again by flood; nor let the sea
Surpass his bounds; nor rain to drown the world,
With man therein or beast; but, when he brings
Over the earth a cloud, will therein set
His triple-colour'd bow, whereon to look,
And call to mind his covenant: day and night,
Seed time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
Shall hold their course; till fire purge all things new,
Both heaven and earth, wherein the just shall dwell.

acceptance of the prayers of Adam and Eve at the beginning of this eleventh book is formed upon that beautiful passage in Holy Writ:—"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne; and the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God." He then notices the poetical beauty of the vision of the angels to Ezekiel, where "every one had four faces; all their shape spangled with eyes;" next, the assembly of the angels to hear the judgment passed upon man; then the conference of Adam and Eve, and the subsequent morning notice of the signs of the changes about to take place in all the creation surrounding them. The next striking passage is the description of the appearance of the archangel Michael, sent to expel them from Paradise.

Addison gives the full measure of praise to Eve's complaint on receiving the notice that she must quit Paradise, and the more masculine and elevated speech of Adam.

The critic then commends that noble part, where the angel leads Adam to the highest mount of Paradise, and lays before him a whole hemisphere, as a proper stage for those visions which were to be represented on it. The image of death in the second vision is represented in all its varieties and attitudes: then, by way of contrast, comes a scene of mirth, love, and jollity.. The deluge is drawn with the most powerful and masterly hand.

BOOK XII.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE present twelfth book being only one half of the original and then concluding tenth, the revelations of the archangel Michael were to be continued from the flood, at which the eleventh book closes: and indeed it was a fortunate circumstance, that Milton, previously to the division, had changed the medium of impression from vision to narration; because it bestows a feature of novelty and distinction upon his concluding book.

It is therefore with some surprise that we meet with any objection to this arrangement of the poet, and the wish that he had imparted all his disclosures in the way of picture and vision, in which they commenced: but Mr. Dunster goes at once to the "heart of the mystery," and inquires whether all the coming subjects were equally suited to the specular mount. The plagues of Egypt, as he observes, so represented, must have been tedious. How was the delivery of the law to have been represented, under all its sublime circumstances, in vision? How could the great miracle (related with concise sublimity) of the heavenly bodies standing still at the command of Joshua, be exhibited in vision? Could the nativity, the life and death of our blessed Lord, or his resurrection (each related in a few lines of exquisite beauty), have been so clearly or adequately displayed in picture? or could his ascension, and resumption of his heavenly seat, and his coming again to judge the world, have been adequately exhibited at all?

The pictures even of the eleventh book were of necessity accompanied by some verbal explanations. In the remainder of the history, as Mr. Dunster remarks, "the accruing materials come too thick to be represented in visions: the task would have been laborious to the artist, who would have fatigued and disgusted those whom he wished to inform and delight." Here, therefore, the poet judiciously reversed his plan.

But there is another topic of remark which the concluding book of Milton's divine poem suggests; it is his comparative affluence of invention. The sentence upon Adam might have been attended by immediate expulsion: but how gracious is the divine condescension, to allow some interval of reflection; and, previously to ejectment, to fortify the minds of the repentant pair with anticipated knowledge and distant consolation! Thus the interest of the poem is kept alive with the reader to the last line. The whole of the twelfth book closely relates to Adam and his posterity; and so delightfully are these soothing hopes of happiness administered by the archangel, that we, equally with Adam, forget that we are to quit Paradise; and are, like him, heart-struck by the sudden warning, that "the hour is come, the very minute of it;" and attend the "hastening angel to the gates of exclusion, with all the sad and lingering acquiescence of our first parents."

* The first edition was in ten books. In the second edition, the seventh and the tenth books, being greatly beyond the rest in the number of the verses, were divided each into two; so that the seventh became the eighth also; the eighth of the first edition then stood ninth; the ninth, tenth; and the tenth of the first edition became of course, when divided, the present eleventh and twelfth.

ARGUMENT.

THE angel Michael continues, from the Flood, to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that seed of the woman shall be which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall; his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension; the state of the church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise; the fiery sword waving behind them, and the cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who on his journey bates at noon,
Though bent on speed; so here the archangel paused
Betwixt the world destroy'd and world restored,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose;
Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes:
  Thus thou hast seen one world begin, and end;
And man, as from a second stock, proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see; but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense:
Henceforth what is to come I will relate;
Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.
  This second source of men, while yet but few,
And while the dread of judgment past remains
Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,
With some regard[a] to what is just and right
Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace;
Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
Corn, wine, and oil; and, from the herd or flock,
Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid,
With large wine-offerings[b] pour'd, and sacred feast,
Shall spend their days in joy unblamed; and dwell
Long time in peace, by families and tribes,
Under paternal rule: till one shall rise[c]
Of proud ambitious heart; who not content
With fair equality, fraternal state,
Will arrogate dominion undeserved
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess

[a] *With some regard.*

This answers to the silver age of the poets: the paradisiacal state is the golden one: that of iron begins soon, v. 24.—RICHARDSON.

[b] *Wine-offerings.*

See Exodus, xxix. 40.—TODD.

[c] *Till one shall rise.*

It is generally agreed that the first governments in the world were patriarchal, "by families and tribes;" and that Nimrod was the first who laid the foundation of kingly government among mankind. Milton, therefore (who was no friend to kingly government at the best), represents him in a very bad light, as a most wicked and insolent tyrant; but he has great authorities, both Jewish and Christian, to justify him for so doing.—NEWTON.

Concord and law of nature from the earth;
Hunting (and men not beasts shall be his game),
With war, and hostile snare, such as refuse
Subjection to his empire tyrannous:
A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled
Before the Lord; as in despite of Heaven,
Or from Heaven, claiming second sovranty;
And from rebellion shall derive his name,
Though of rebellion [d] others he accuse.
He with a crew, whom like ambition joins
With him or under him to tyrannise,
Marching from Eden [e] towards the west, shall find
The plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge
Boils out from under ground, the mouth of hell:
Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build
A city and tower, whose top may reach to heaven,
And get themselves a name; lest, far dispersed
In foreign lands, their memory be lost;
Regardless whether good or evil fame.
But God, who oft descends to visit men
Unseen, and through their habitations walks
To mark their doings, them beholding soon,
Comes down to see their city [f], ere the tower
Obstruct heaven-towers; and in derision sets
Upon their tongues a various spirit, to rase
Quite out their native language; and, instead,
To sow a jangling noise of words unknown:
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud,
Among the builders; each to other calls,
Not understood; till hoarse, and all in rage,
As mock'd they storm: great laughter was in heaven,
And looking down, to see the hubbub strange,
And hear the din: thus was the building left
Ridiculous, and the work Confusion named [g].
Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeased:
O execrable son! so to aspire

[d] *Though of rebellion.*

This was added by our author, probably not without a view to his own time; when himself and those of his own party were stigmatized as the worst of rebels.—NEWTON.

[e] *Marching from Eden.*

See Gen. xi. 2, &c.: "And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."—NEWTON.

[f] *See their city.*

See Gen. xi. 5, &c. The Scripture speaks after the manner of men: so the heathen gods are often represented as coming down to observe human actions, as in the stories of Lycaon, Baucis and Philemon, &c.

[g] *Confusion named.*

Babel in Hebrew signifies *confusion.*—NEWTON.

Above his brethren; to himself assuming
Authority usurp'd, from God not given:
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
Dominion absolute; that right we hold
By his dominion; but man over men
He made not lord; such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free[h].
But this usurper his encroachment proud
Stays not on man; to God his tower intends
Siege and defiance: wretched man! what food
Will he convey up thither, to sustain
Himself and his rash army; where thin air
Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,
And famish him of breath, if not of bread?
  To whom thus Michael: Justly thou abhorr'st
That son, who on the quiet state of men
Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
Rational liberty; yet know withal,
Since thy original lapse, true liberty[i]
Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
Twinn'd, and from her hath no dividual being:
Reason in man obscured, or not obey'd,
Immediately inordinate desires
And upstart passions catch the government
From reason; and to servitude reduce
Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits
Within himself unworthy powers to reign
Over free reason, God, in judgment just,
Subjects him from without to violent lords;
Who oft as undeservedly enthral
His outward freedom: tyranny must be;
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice, and some fatal curse annex'd,
Deprives them of their outward liberty;
Their inward lost: witness the irreverent son
Of him who built the ark; who for the shame
Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,
Servant of servants, on his vicious race.
Thus will this latter, as the former world,
Still tend from bad to worse; till God at last,
Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw

[h] *From human free.*

Left mankind in full and free possession of their liberty.—HUME.

[i] *True liberty.*

So Milton in his sonnet:—

liberty;—
For who loves that must first be wise and good.

His presence from among them, and avert
His holy eyes; resolving from thenceforth
To leave them to their own polluted ways;
And one peculiar nation to select
From all the rest, of whom to be invoked,
A nation from one faithful man to spring:
Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
Bred up in idol-worship[j]: O, that men
(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
While yet the patriarch lived[k] who 'scaped the flood,
As to forsake the living God, and fall
To worship their own work in wood and stone
For gods! Yet him God the Most High vouchsafes
To call by vision, from his father's house,
His kindred, and false gods, into a land
Which he will show him; and from him will raise
A mighty nation, and upon him shower
His benediction so, that in his seed
All nations shall be blest: he straight obeys[l];
Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes:
I see him[m], but thou canst not, with what faith
He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,
Ur of Chaldæa[n], passing now the ford
To Haran; after him a cumbrous train[o]

[j] *Bred up in idol-worship.*

We read in Josh. xxiv. 2: "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods." Now as Terah, Abraham's father, was an idolator, I think we may be certain that Abraham was bred up in the religion of his father, though he renounced it afterwards, and in all probability converted his father likewise; for Terah removed with Abraham to Haran, and there died. See Gen. xi. 31, 32.—NEWTON.

[k] *While yet the patriarch lived.*

It appears from the computations given by Moses, Gen. xi., that Terah, the father of Abraham, was born two hundred and twenty-two years after the flood, but Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years, Gen. ix. 28; and we have proved from Joshua, that Terah, and the ancestors of Abraham, "served other gods;" and from the Jewish traditions we learn farther, that Terah, and Nachor his father, and Serug his grandfather, were statuaries and carvers of idols: and therefore idolatry was set up in the world, *while yet the patriarch lived who 'scaped the flood.*—NEWTON.

[l] *He straight obeys.*

See Heb. xi. 8.

[m] *I see him.*

Milton, sensible that this long historical description might grow irksome, has varied the manner of representing it as much as possible; beginning first with supposing Adam to have a prospect of it before his eyes; next, by making the angel the relater of it; and, lastly, by uniting the two former methods, and making Michael see it as in vision, and give a rapturous enlivened account of it to Adam. This gives great ease to the languishing attention of the reader.—THYER.

[n] *Ur of Chaldæa.*

See Gen. xi. 31. Chaldæa, a province of Asia, lying east of the Euphrates, and west of the Tigris: Ur, a city of Chaldæa, the country of Abraham and Terah.—NEWTON.

[o] *A cumbrous train.*

The poet here has an opportunity of introducing the picturesque description of Abra-

Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude;
Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
With God, who call'd him, in a land unknown.
Canaan he now attains; I see his tents
Pitch'd about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain
Of Moreh; there by promise he receives
Gift to his progeny of all that land,
From Hamath northward to the desert south
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed);
From Hermon east to the great western sea;
Mount Hermon; yonder sea:—each place behold
In prospect, as I point them; on the shore,
Mount Carmel; here, the double-founted stream,
Jordan, true limit eastward; but his sons
Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
This ponder, that all nations of the earth
Shall in his seed be blessed: by that seed
Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise
The serpent's head; whereof to thee anon
Plainlier shall be reveal'd. This patriarch blest,
Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call,
A son, and of his son a grandchild, leaves;
Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown;
The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs
From Canaan, to a land hereafter call'd
Egypt, divided by the river Nile;
See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
Into the sea: to sojourn in that land
He comes, invited by a younger son
In time of dearth; a son, whose worthy deeds
Raise him to be the second in that realm
Of Pharaoh: there he dies, and leaves his race
Growing into a nation; and now grown
Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves
Inhospitably, and kills their infant males:
Till by two brethren (these two brethren call
Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim
His people from enthralment, they return,
With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.
But first, the lawless tyrant, who denies
To know their God, or message to regard,
Must be compell'd by signs and judgments dire;
To blood unshed the rivers must be turn'd;
Frogs, lice, and flies must all his palace fill

ham, with his long train of flocks, herds, family, and servants, passing in procession the river, which description I consider as a fortunate application of the account given of Jacob's returning from Mesopotamia into Canaan, Gen. xxxii. 13, 16, 22, 23.—Dunster.

With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land;
His cattle must of rot and murren die;
Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,
And all his people; thunder mix'd with hail,
Hail mix'd with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky,
And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls;
What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,
A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down
Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green;
Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
Palpable darkness, and blot out three days;
Last, with one midnight-stroke, all the first-born
Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds
The river-dragon[p] tamed at length submits
To let his sojourners depart, and oft
Humbles his stubborn heart: but still, as ice
More harden'd after thaw; till, in his rage
Pursuing whom he late dismiss'd, the sea
Swallows him with his host; but them lets pass,
As on dry land, between two crystal walls;
Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand
Divided till his rescued gain their shore:
Such wondrous power God to his saint will lend,
Though present in his angel; who shall go
Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire;
By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire;
To guide them in their journey, and remove
Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues:
All night he will pursue; but his approach
Darkness defends between till morning watch;
Then through the fiery pillar and the cloud,
God looking forth will trouble all his host,
And craze their chariot wheels: when by command
Moses once more his potent rod extends
Over the sea; the sea his rod obeys;
On their embattel'd ranks the waves return,
And overwhelm their war: the race elect[q]
Safe towards Canaan from the shore advance
Through the wild Desert; not the readiest way,
Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarm'd,
War terrify them inexpert, and fear

[p] *The river-dragon.*

The river-dragon, as Addison has observed, is Pharaoh, in allusion to Ezekiel, xxix. 3.—TODD.

[q] *The race elect.*

It is remarkable that here Milton omits the moral cause, though he gives the poetical, of the Israelites wandering forty years in the wilderness; and this was their poltroon mutiny on the return of the spies. He omitted this with judgment; for this last speech of the angel was to give such a representation of things as might convey comfort to Adam; otherwise the story of the brazen serpent would have afforded noble imagery.—WARBURTON.

Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
Inglorious life with servitude; for life
To noble and ignoble is more sweet
Untrain'd in arms, where rashness leads not on.
This also shall they gain by their delay
In the wide wilderness; there they shall found
Their government, and their great senate choose
Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws, ordain'd:
God from the mount of Sinai, whose gray top
Shall tremble, he descending, will himself
In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpets' sound,
Ordain them laws[r]; part, such as appertain
To civil justice; part, religious rites
Of sacrifice; informing them, by types
And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise
The serpent, by what means he shall achieve
Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God
To mortal ear is dreadful: they beseech
That Moses might report to them his will,
And terrour cease: he grants what they besought,
Instructed that to God is no access
Without mediator; whose high office now
Moses in figure bears, to introduce
One greater, of whose day he shall foretell;
And all the prophets in their age the times
Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus, laws and rites
Establish'd, such delight hath God in men,
Obedient to his will, that he vouchsafes
Among them to set up his tabernacle;—
The Holy One with mortal men to dwell:
By his prescript a sanctuary is framed
Of cedar, overlaid with gold; therein
An ark, and in the ark his testimony,
The records of his covenant; over these
A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings
Of two bright cherubim; before him burn
Seven lamps, as in a zodiac[s] representing

[r] *Ver. 230, &c.*

By these passages Milton seems to have understood no more of the Jewish institution than he saw in the small Presbyterian systems; otherwise the true idea of the theocracy would have afforded some noble observations.—WARBURTON.

Milton speaks of the civil and the ritual, the judicial and the ceremonial precepts delivered to the Jews; but why did he omit the moral law contained in the ten commandments? Possibly his reason might be, because this was supposed to be written originally in the heart of man, and therefore Adam must have been perfectly acquainted with it; but however I think, this should have been particularly mentioned, as it was published at this time in the most solemn manner by God from mount Sinai; and as it was thought worthy to be written with his own finger upon two tables of stone, when the rest was conveyed to the people by the writing and preaching of Moses, as a mediator between God and them.—GREENWOOD.

[s] *Seven lamps, as in a zodiac.*

That the seven lamps signified the seven planets, and that therefore the lamps stood

The heavenly fires; over the tent a cloud
Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night;
Save when they journey[t], and at length they come,
Conducted by his angel, to the land
Promised to Abraham and his seed: the rest
Were long to tell; how many battles fought;
How many kings destroy'd, and kingdoms won;
Or how the sun shall in mid heaven stand still
A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,
Man's voice commanding,—Sun, in Gibeon stand,
And thou, moon, in the vale of Aialon
Till Israel overcome!—so call the third
From Abraham, son of Isaac; and from him
His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win.
  Here Adam interposed: O sent from Heaven,
Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things
Thou hast reveal'd; those chiefly which concern
Just Abraham and his seed; now first I find
Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased;
Erewhile perplex'd with thoughts, what would become
Of me and all mankind: but now I see
His day, in whom all nations shall be blest;
Favour unmerited by me who sought
Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
This yet I apprehend not; why to those,
Among whom God will deign to dwell on earth,
So many and so various laws are given:
So many laws argue[u] so many sins
Among them: how can God with such reside?

slope-wise, as it were to express the obliquity of the zodiac, is the gloss of Josephus, from whom probably Milton borrowed it. Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. c. vi. and vii., and De Bel. Jud. lib. v. c. 5. See likewise Mede's discourse x. upon the seven archangels. Mr. Hume quotes likewise the Latin of Philo to the same purpose. See Cornelius à Lapide, upon Exod. xxv. 31.—NEWTON.

[t] *Save when they journey.*

See Exod. xl. 34, &c.: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys; but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." Thus it was in all places wherever they came: and this is what Milton says: in short, the cloud was over the tent by day, and the fire (called here a *fiery gleam*) by night, when they journeyed not. He takes no notice how it was when they did: which this text (for the infinite beauty of which we have given it at length) explains; the cloud was then taken up; how then? "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, to go by day and night," c. xiii. 21. Other armies pitch their ensigns when they encamp, and lift them up when they march: so does the Lord of Hosts, leading forth his people. But, what ensigns! how sublime! Milton seems too concise here.—RICHARDSON.

[u] *So many laws argue.*

The scruple of our first father, and the reply of the angel, are grounded upon St. Paul's

To whom thus Michael: Doubt not but that sin
Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
And therefore was law given them, to evince
Their natural pravity by stirring up
Sin against law to fight; that when they see
Law can discover sin, but not remove,
Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
The blood of bulls and goats; they may conclude
Some blood more precious must be paid for man;
Just for unjust; that in such righteousness
To them by faith imputed they may find
Justification towards God and peace
Of conscience; which the law by ceremonies
Cannot appease; nor man the moral part
Perform; and, not performing, cannot live.
So law appears imperfect; and but given
With purpose to resign them in full time,
Up to a better covenant; disciplined
From shadowy types to truth; from flesh to spirit;
From imposition of strict laws to free
Acceptance of large grace; from servile fear
To filial; works of law to works of faith.
And therefore shall not Moses [v], though of God
Highly beloved, being but the minister
Of law, his people into Canaan lead;
But Joshua, whom the Gentiles Jesus call;
His name and office bearing [w], who shall quell
The adversary serpent, and bring back
Through the world's wilderness long-wander'd man
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan placed,
Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
National interrupt their public peace,

epistles, and particularly those to the Ephesians, Galatians, and Hebrews, as the reader, who is at all conversant with these sacred writings, will easily perceive. Compare the following texts with the poet: Gal. iii. 19. Rom. vii. 7, 8. Rom. iii. 20. Heb. ix. 13, 14. Heb. x. 4, 5. Rom. iv. 22, 23, 24. Rom. v. 1. Heb. vii. 18, 19. Heb. x. 1. Gal. iii. 11, 12, 23. Gal. iv. 7. Rom. viii. 15. Milton has here, in a few verses, admirably summed up the sense and argument of these and more texts of Scripture. It is really wonderful how he could comprise so much divinity in so few words, and at the same time express it with so much strength and perspicuity.—NEWTON.

[v] *And therefore shall not Moses.*

Moses died in Mount Nebo, in the land of Moab, from whence he had the prospect of the Promised Land, but not the honour of leading the Israelites to possess it; which was reserved for Joshua; Deut. xxxiv., Josh. i.—HUME.

[w] *His name and office bearing.*

Joshua was in many things a type of Jesus; and the names are the same, "Joshua" according to the Hebrew, and "Jesus" in Greek. The Seventy always render "Joshua" by "Jesus;" and there are two passages in the New Testament, where "Jesus" is used for "Joshua;" once by St. Stephen, Acts vii. 45, and again by St. Paul, Heb. iv. 8. And the name Joshua, or Jesus, signifies a Saviour.—NEWTON.

Provoking God to raise them enemies;
From whom as oft he saves them penitent
By judges first, then under kings; of whom
The second, both for piety renown'd
And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
Irrevocable, that his regal throne
For ever shall endure; the like shall sing
All prophecy, that of the royal stock
Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
A son, the woman's seed to thee foretold,
Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust
All nations; and to kings foretold of kings
The last; for of his reign shall be no end.
But first a long succession must ensue;
And his next son for wealth and wisdom famed,
The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
Such follow him as shall be register'd
Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll:
Whose foul idolatries, and other faults
Heap'd to the popular sum, will so incense
God, as to leave them, and expose their land,
Their city, his temple, and his holy ark,
With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
To that proud city whose high walls thou saw'st
Left in confusion; Babylon thence call'd.
There in captivity he lets them dwell
The space of seventy years; then brings them back,
Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn
To David, stablish'd as the days of heaven.
Return'd from Babylon by leave of kings
Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God
They first re-edify; and for a while
In mean estate live moderate; till, grown
In wealth and multitude, factious they grow:
But first among the priests dissension springs,
Men who attend the altar, and should most
Endeavour peace: their strife pollution brings[1]
Upon the temple itself: at last they seize
The sceptre, and regard not David's sons;
Then lose it to a stranger, that the true
Anointed King Messiah might be born

[1] *Their strife pollution brings.*

For it was chiefly through the contests between Jason and Menelaus, high priests of the Jews, that the temple was polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes. See 2 Maccab. v., and Prideaux. *At last they seize the sceptre:* Aristobulus, eldest son of Hyrcanus, high-priest of the Jews, was the first who assumed the title of king after the Babylonish captivity; before Christ 107. *And regard not David's sons*, none of that family having had the government since Zerubbabel. *Then lose it to a stranger;* to Herod, who was an Idumean, in whose reign Christ was born. See Josephus and Prideaux.—NEWTON.

Barr'd of his right; yet at his birth a star,
Unseen before in heaven, proclaims him come;
And guides the eastern sages, who inquire
His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold:
His place of birth a solemn angel tells
To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night:
They gladly thither haste, and by a quire
Of squadron'd angels hear his carol sung.
A virgin is his mother, but his sire
The power of the Most High; he shall ascend
The throne hereditary, and bound his reign
With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the heavens.
He ceased; discerning Adam with such joy
Surcharged, as had like grief been dew'd in tears,
Without the vent of words, which these he breathed:
O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope; now clear I understand
What oft my steadiest thoughts have search'd in vain;
Why our great Expectation should be call'd
The seed of woman: virgin mother, hail,
High in the love of Heaven; yet from my loins
Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
Of God Most High; so God with man unites.
Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise
Expect with mortal pain: say where and when
Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the victor's heel?
To whom thus Michael: Dream not of their fight,
As of a duel, or the local wounds
Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son
Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy; nor so is overcome
Satan, whose fall from heaven, a deadlier bruise,
Disabled not to give thee thy death's wound:
Which he, who comes, thy Saviour, shall recure,
Not by destroying Satan but his works,
In thee, and in thy seed: nor can this be,
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
Obedience to the law of God, imposed
On penalty of death; and suffering death,
The penalty of thy transgression due,
And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:
So only can high justice rest appaid.
The law of God exact he shall fulfil
Both by obedience, and by love, though love
Alone fulfill the law; thy punishment
He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
To a reproachful life and cursed death;
Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
In his redemption; and that his obedience,

Imputed, becomes theirs by faith; his merits
To save them, not their own, though legal works.
For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,
Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemn'd
A shameful and accursed, nail'd to the cross
By his own nation; slain for bringing life:
But to the cross he nails thy enemies,
The law that is against thee, and the sins
Of all mankind with him there crucified,
Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
In this his satisfaction: so he dies,
But soon revives; death over him no power
Shall long usurp; ere the third dawning light
Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
Thy ransom paid, which man from death redeems,
His death for man, as many as offer'd life
Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
By faith not void of works: this godlike act
Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died,
In sin for ever lost from life; this act
Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength,
Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms;
And fix far deeper in his head their stings
Than temporal death shall bruise the victor's heel,
Or theirs whom he redeems; a death, like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life.
Nor after resurrection shall he stay
Longer on earth, than certain times to appear
To his disciples, men who in his life
Still follow'd him; to them shall leave in charge
To teach all nations what of him they learn'd
And his salvation: them who shall believe
Baptising in the profluent stream, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
For death, like that which the Redeemer died.
All nations they shall teach; for, from that day,
Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins
Salvation shall be preach'd, but to the sons
Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world;
So in his seed all nations shall be blest.
Then to the heaven of heavens he shall ascend
With victory triumphing through the air
Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
The serpent, prince of air, and drag in chains
Through all his realm, and there confounded leave;
Then enter into glory, and resume
His seat at God's right hand exalted high

Above all names in heaven; and thence shall come
When this world's dissolution shall be ripe,
With glory and power to judge both quick and dead;
To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward
His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
Whether in heaven or earth; for then the earth
Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
Than this of Eden, and far happier days.
  So spake the archangel Michael; then paused,
As at the world's great period; and our sire,
Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied:
  O, goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done, and occasion'd; or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring;
To God more glory, more good will to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.
But say, if our Deliverer up to heaven
Must reascend, what will betide the few
His faithful left among the unfaithful herd,
The enemies of truth? Who then shall guide
His people, who defend? Will they not deal
Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?
  Be sure they will, said the angel; but from Heaven
He to his own a Comforter will send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His Spirit within them; and the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth; and also arm
With spiritual armour, able to resist
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts;
What man can do against them, not afraid,
Though to the death: against such cruelties
With inward consolations recompensed,
And oft supported so as shall amaze
Their proudest persecutors; for the Spirit,
Pour'd first on his apostles, whom he sends
To evangelise the nations, then on all
Baptised, shall them with wondrous gifts endue
To speak all tongues, and do all miracles,
As did their Lord before them. Thus they win
Great numbers of each nation to receive
With joy the tidings brought from Heaven: at length,
Their ministry perform'd, and race well run,
Their doctrine and their story written left,

They die; but in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition; and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood [y].
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places, and titles, and with these to join
Secular power [z]; though feigning still to act
By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promised alike, and given
To all believers; and, from that pretence,
Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience; laws which none shall find [a]
Left them inroll'd, or what the Spirit within
Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then
But force the Spirit of grace itself, and bind
His consort Liberty [b]? what but unbuild
His living temples [c], built by faith to stand,
Their own faith, not another's? for on earth
Who against faith and conscience can be heard
Infallible? yet many will presume:
Whence heavy persecutions shall arise
On all who in the worship persevere
Of spirit and truth; the rest, far greater part,
Will deem in outward rites and specious forms

[y] *Though not but by the Spirit understood.*

I do not think Milton, in all his writings, ever gave a stronger proof of his enthusiastical spirit than in this line.—WARBURTON.

[z] *Secular power.*

On this subject he had been particularly copious in the tract of 'Reformation in England,' Prose Works, i. p. 264, ed. 1698:—"If the life of Christ be hid to this world, much more is his sceptre unoperative, but in spiritual things. And thus lived for two or three ages the successours of the apostles. But when, through Constantine's lavish superstition, they forsook their first love, and *set themselves up too in God's stead,* Mammon and their belly; then, taking advantage of *the spiritual power, which they had on men's consciences,* they began to cast a longing eye to get the body also, and bodily things, into their command; upon which, their carnal desires, the Spirit daily quenching and dying in them, knew no way to keep themselves up from falling to nothing, but by bolstering and supporting their inward rottenness *by a carnal and outward strength.*"—TODD.

[a] *Laws which none shall find.*

Laws, as Hume and Dr. Newton observe, neither agreeable to revealed nor natural religion; neither to be found in Holy Scripture, nor written on their hearts by the Spirit of God; laws contrary to his promise, who has said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," Jer. xxxi. 33.—TODD.

[b] *His consort Liberty.*

"For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," 2 Cor. iii. 17.—NEWTON.

[c] *His living temples.*

Christians are called "the temples of God," 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; and vi. 19.—NEWTON. See also Milton's Prose Works, vol. i. p. 231, ed. 1698:—"As if the touch of a lay Christian, who is nevertheless God's living temple, could profane dead Judaisms."—TODD.

Religion satisfied; truth shall retire
Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of faith
Rarely be found: so shall the world go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign;
Under her own weight groaning; till the day
Appear of respiration to the just,
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
The woman's seed; obscurely then foretold,
Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord:
Last, in the clouds[d], from heaven to be reveal'd
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted world; then raise
From the conflagrant mass purged and refined,
New heavens, new earth[e], ages of endless date,
Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love;
To bring forth fruits, joy, and eternal bliss.
He ended; and thus Adam last replied:
How soon hath thy prediction, seer blest,
Measured this transient world, the race of time,
Till time stand fix'd! Beyond is all abyss,
Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain;
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God; to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on him sole depend,
Merciful over all his works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak

[d] *Last, in the clouds.*

"Coming in the clouds of heaven," Matt. xxvi. 64:—"The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father," Matt. xvi. 27.—GILLIES.

[e] *New heavens, new earth.*

The very words of St. Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 13:—"Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." This notion of the heavens and earth being renewed after the conflagration, and made the habitation of angels and just men made perfect, was very pleasing to Milton, as it was to Dr. Burnet; and must be to every one of a fine and exalted imagination: and Milton has enlarged upon it in several parts of his works, and particularly in this poem, b. iii. 333, &c.; b. x. 638; b. xi. 65, 900; b. xii. 462.—NEWTON.

Compare with this poetic passage Milton's animated description in prose of Christ's "universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they undoubtedly, that, by their labours, counsels, and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, shall receive, above the inferior orders of the blessed, the regal addition of principalities, legions, and thrones, into their glorious titles; and in supereminence of beatific vision progressing the dateless and irrevoluble circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss in over-measure for ever." See the end of his 'Reformation in England.'—TODD.

Subverting worldly strong [f], and worldly wise
By simply meek: that suffering for truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory;
And, to the faithful, death the gate of life;
Taught this by his example, whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.
  To whom thus also the angel last replied:
This having learn'd, thou hast attain'd the sum
Of wisdom: hope no higher, though all the stars [g]
Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers,
All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea,
And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,
And all the rule, one empire: only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
By name to come call'd charity, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A paradise within thee, happier far.
Let us descend now therefore from this top
Of speculation [h]; for the hour precise
Exacts our parting hence; and, see! the guards,
By me encamped on yonder hill, expect
Their motion; at whose front a flaming sword,
In signal of remove, waves fiercely round.
We may no longer stay: go, waken Eve;
Her also I with gentle dreams have calm'd,
Portending good, and all her spirits composed
To meek submission: thou, at season fit,
Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard;
Chiefly, what may concern her faith to know,
The great deliverance by her seed to come
(For by the woman's seed) on all mankind;

[f] *Subverting worldly strong.*

"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty," 1 Cor. i. 27. And so in the rest there is the sense of Scripture, if not the very words: as, *to obey is best*:—"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," 1 Sam. xv. 22. And, *on him sole depend*:—"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you," 1 Pet. v. 7. And *merciful over all his works*:—"His tender mercies are over all his works," Psalm cxlv. 9.—NEWTON.

[g] *Though all the stars.*

The turn of the sentence resembles, as Mr. Stillingfleet observes, when St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xiii. 2:—"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am nothing."—TODD.

[h] *From this top*
Of speculation.

From this hill of prophecy and prediction. *Speculation*, a watching on a tower or high place; thence a discovery, and therefore applied to the prophets in the sacred page, who are called "seers" and "watchmen," speculators, of *specula*, Latin, a "watch-tower." See Ezekiel iii. 17; and also chap. xxxiii. 3-7.—HUME.

That ye may live, which will be many days,
Both in one faith unanimous, though sad,
With cause, for evils past; yet much more cheer'd
With meditation on the happy end.
He ended, and they both descend the hill:
Descended, Adam to the bower, where Eve
Lay sleeping, ran before; but found her waked;
And thus with words not sad she him received:
Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know;
For God is also in sleep [i]; and dreams advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with sorrow and heart's distress
Wearied I fell asleep: but now lead on;
In me is no delay; with thee to go,
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling: thou to me
Art all things under heaven, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banish'd hence.
This farther consolation yet secure
I carry hence; though all by me is lost,
Such favour I unworthy am vouchsafed,
By me the promised Seed shall all restore.
So spake our mother Eve, and Adam heard
Well pleased, but answer'd not: for now, too nigh
The archangel stood; and from the other hill
To their fix'd station, all in bright array
The cherubim descended; on the ground
Gliding meteorous, as evening-mist
Risen from a river o'er the marish glides,
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,
The brandish'd sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime: whereat
In either hand the hastening angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain; then disappeared.
They, looking back, all the the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand [j]; the gate

[i] *For God is also in sleep.*

See Numb. xii. 6:—"If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and I will speak unto him in a dream." And thus Homer, Il. i. 63:—Καὶ γάρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διός ἐστιν. And the application is very elegant in this place, as Adam's was a vision, and Eve's a dream; and God was in the one as well as in the other.—NEWTON.

[j] *Waved over by that flaming brand.*

Of *brand* for *sword* take the following explanation from Hickes:—"In the second

With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms[k].
Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon:
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

part of the 'Edda Islandica,' among other appellations, 'a sword' is denominated 'brand:' and 'glad,' or 'glod,' that is, 'titio, torris, pruna ignita;' and the hall of Odin is said to be illuminated by drawn swords only. A writer of no less learning than penetration, N. Salanus Westmannus, in his dissertation, entitled 'Gladius Scythicus,' p. 6, 7, observes, that the ancients formed their swords in imitation of a flaming fire; and thus from 'brand,' a 'sword,' came our English phrase, to 'brandish a sword,' 'gladium strictum vibrando coruscare facere.' "—T. WARTON.

[k] The poetical imagery of this passage is splendid, sublime, and at the same time pathetic; and of a majestic conciseness.

The eleventh and twelfth books are built upon the single circumstance of the removal of our first parents from Paradise; but though this is not in itself so great a subject as that in most of the foregoing books, it is extended and diversified with so many surprising incidents and pleasing episodes, that these last two books can by no means be looked upon as unequal parts of this divine poem.

Milton, after having represented in vision the history of mankind to the first great period of nature, despatches the remaining part of it in narration.

In some places the author has been so attentive to his divinity that he has neglected his poetry; the narrative, however, rises very happily on several occasions, where the subject is capable of poetical ornaments; as particularly in the confusion which he describes among the builders of Babel, and in his short sketch of the plagues of Egypt.—The storm of hail and fire, and the darkness that overspread the land for three days, are described with great strength: the beautiful passage which follows is raised upon noble hints in Scripture:—

Thus with ten wounds
The river-dragon tamed, at length submits
To let his sojourners depart, &c.

The river-dragon is an allusion to the crocodile, which inhabits the Nile, from whence Egypt derives her plenty. This allusion is taken from that sublime passage in Ezekiel:—"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lyeth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is my own, and I have made it for myself." Milton has given us another very noble and poetical image in the same description, which is copied almost word for word out of the history of Moses:—

All night he will pursue, but his approach
Darkness defends between, till morning watch.

As the principal design of this episode was to give Adam an idea of the Holy Person who was to reinstate human nature in that happiness and perfection from which it had fallen, the poet confines himself to the line of Abraham, from whence the Messiah was to descend. The angel is described as seeing the patriarch actually travelling towards the Land of Promise, which gives a particular liveliness to this part of the description, from ver. 128 to ver. 140.

The poet has very finely represented the joy and gladness of heart which rises in Adam upon his discovery of the Messiah. As he sees his day at a distance through types and shadows, he rejoices in it; but when he finds the redemption of man completed and Paradise again renewed, he breaks forth in rapture and transport:—

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce, &c.

Milton's poem ends very nobly. The last speeches of Adam and the archangel are full of moral and instructive sentiments. The sleep that fell upon Eve, and the effects it had in quieting the disorders of her mind, produce the same kind of consolation in

the reader; who cannot peruse the last beautiful speech which is ascribed to the mother of mankind, without a secret pleasure and satisfaction. The following lines, which conclude the poem, rise in a most glorious blaze of poetical images and expressions.—ADDISON.

It is difficult to add anything to Addison's Essays on the 'Paradise Lost;' but still I must extract a few additional encomiums from other critics, and first from Beattie:

In the concluding passage of the poem there is brought together, with uncommon strength of fancy, and rapidity of narrative, a number of circumstances wonderfully adapted to the purpose of filling the mind with ideas of terrific grandeur:—the descent of the cherubim; the flaming sword; the archangel leading in haste our first parents down from the heights of Paradise, and then disappearing; and, above all, the scene that presents itself on their looking behind them:—

> They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
> Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
> Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
> With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms:

to which the remaining verses form the most striking contrast that can be imagined. The final couplet renews our sorrow; by exhibiting, with picturesque accuracy, the most mournful scene in nature; which yet is so prepared, as to raise comfort, and dispose to resignation. And thus, while we are at once melting in tenderness, elevated with pious hope, and overwhelmed with the grandeur of description, the divine poem concludes.—BEATTIE.

If ever any poem was truly poetical, if ever any abounded with poetry, it is 'Paradise Lost.' What an expansion of facts from a small seed of history! What worlds are invented, what embellishments of nature upon what our senses present us with! Divine things are more nobly, more divinely represented to the imagination, than by any other poem; a more beautiful idea is given of nature than any poet has pretended to:—nature, as just come out of the hand of God, in all its virgin loveliness, glory, and purity; and the human race is shown, not, as Homer's, more gigantic, more robust, more valiant; but without comparison more truly amiable, more so than by the pictures and statues of the greatest masters; and all these sublime ideas are conveyed to us in the most effectual and engaging manner. The mind of the reader is tempered and prepared by pleasure; it is drawn and allured; it is awakened and invigorated, to receive such impressions as the poet intended to give it. The poem opens the fountains of knowledge, piety, and virtue; and pours along full streams of peace, comfort, and joy, to such as can penetrate the true sense of the writer, and obediently listen to his song. In reading the Iliad or Æneid we treasure up a collection of fine imaginative pictures, as when we read 'Paradise Lost;' only that from thence we have (to speak like a connoisseur) more Rafaelles, Corregios, Guidos, &c. Milton's pictures are more sublime and great, divine and lovely, than Homer's or Virgil's, or those of any other poets, ancient or modern.—RICHARDSON.

Throughout the whole of 'Paradise Lost' the author appears to have been a most critical reader and passionate admirer of Holy Scripture: he is indebted to Scripture infinitely more than to Homer and Virgil, and all other books whatever. Not only the principal fable, but all his episodes are founded upon Scripture: the Scripture has not only furnished him with the noblest hints, raised his thoughts, and fired his imagination; but has also very much enriched his language, given a certain solemnity and majesty to his diction, and supplied him with many of his choicest, happiest expressions. Let men, therefore, learn from this instance to reverence the Sacred Writings: if any man can pretend to deride or despise them, it must be said of him, at least, that he has a taste and genius the most different from Milton's that can be imagined. Whoever has any true taste and genius, we are confident, will esteem this poem the best of modern productions, and the Scriptures the best of all ancient ones.—NEWTON.

Johnson's criticism, inserted in his 'Life of Milton,' is so universally known that I shall not repeat it here: it shows the critic to have been a master of language, and of perspicuity and method of ideas: it has not, however, the sensibility, the grace,

and the nice perceptions of Addison: it is analytical and dry. As it does not illustrate any of the abstract positions by cited instances, it requires a philosophical mind to feel its full force: it has wrapped up the praises, which were popularly expressed by Addison, in language adapted to the learned. The truth is, that Johnson's head was more the parent of that panegyric than his heart: he speaks by rule; and by rule he is forced to admire. Rules are vain, to which the heart does not assent. Many of the attractions of Milton's poem are not at all indicated by the general words of Johnson. From Addison's critique, we can learn distinctly its character and colours; we can be taught how to appreciate; and can judge by the examples produced, how far our own sympathies go with the commentator: we cannot read therefore without being made converts, where the comment is right. It is not only in the grand outline that Milton's mighty excellence lies; it is in filling up all the parts even to the least minutiæ; the images, the sentiments, the long argumentative passages, are all admirable, taken separately; they form a double force, as essential parts of one large and magnificent whole. The images are of two sorts; inventive and reflective; the first are, of course, of the highest order.

If our conceptions were confined to what reality and experience have impressed upon us, our minds would be narrow, and our faculties without light. The power of inventive imagination approaches to something above humanity; it makes us participant of other worlds and other states of being. Still mere invention is nothing, unless its quality be high and beautiful. Shakespeare's invention was in the most eminent degree rich; but still it was mere human invention. The invention of the character of Satan, and of the good and bad angels, and of the seats of bliss, and of Pandæmonium, and of Chaos and the gates of hell, and of Sin and Death, and other supernatural agencies, is unquestionably of a far loftier and more astonishing order.

Though the arts of composition, carried one step beyond the point which brings out the thought most clearly and forcibly, do harm rather than good; yet up to this point they are of course great aids; and all these Milton possessed in the utmost perfection: all the strength of language, all its turns, breaks, and varieties, all its flows and harmonies, and all its learned allusions, were his. In Pope there is a monotony and technical mellifluence: in Milton there is strength with harmony, and simplicity with elevation. He is never stilted, never gilded with tinsel; never more cramped than if he were writing in prose; and, while he has all the elevation, he has all the freedom of unshackled language. To render metre during a long poem unfatiguing, there must be an infinite diversity of combinations of sound and position of words, which no English bard but Milton has reached. Johnson, assuming that the English heroic line ought to consist of iambics, has tried it by false tests: it admits as many varied feet as Horace's Odes; and, so scanned, all Milton's lines are accented right.

If we consider the 'Paradise Lost' with respect to instruction, it is the deepest and the wisest of all the uninspired poems which ever were written: and what poem can be good, which does not satisfy the understanding?

Of almost all other poems it may be said, that they are intended more for delight than instruction; and instruction in poetry will not do without delight: yet when to the highest delight is added the most profound instruction, what fame can equal the value of the composition? Such unquestionably is the compound merit of the 'Paradise Lost.' It is a duty imperious on him who has an intellect capable of receiving this instruction, not to neglect the cultivation of it; in him who understands the English language, the neglect to study this poem is the neglect of a positive duty: here is to be found in combination what can be learned nowhere else.

There is a mode of presenting objects to the imagination, which purifies, sharpens, and exalts the mind: there may be mere sports of the imagination, which may be innocent, but fruitless. Such is never Milton's produce; he never indulges in mere ornament or display: his light is fire, and nutriment, and guidance: like the dawn of returning day to the vegetation of the earth, which dispels the noxious vapours of night, and pierces the incumbent weight of the air; it withdraws the mantle of dim shadows from common minds, and irradiates them with a shining lamp. As to what are called the figures of poetry, in which Pope deals so much, they are never admitted by the solid and stern richness of Milton.

The generality even of the better classes of poetry is not the food of the mind,

but its mere luxury; Milton's is its substance, its life, its essence: he introduces the gravest, the most abstruse, the most learned topics into his poetry; and by a spiritual process, which he only possesses, converts them into the very essence of poetical inspiration. I assert, in defiance of Dryden, that there are no flats in Milton; inequalities there are; but they are not flats, in Dryden's sense of the word. Dryden was a man of vigorous talent, but he was an artist in poetry: if active and powerful talent is genius, then he had genius; otherwise not: a clear perception and vigorous expression is not genius. Dryden had not a creative mind; Milton was all creation: we want new ideas, not old ones better dressed. Dryden thought that what was not worked up into a pointed iambic couplet was flat: he valued not the ore; he deemed that the whole merit lay in the use of the tool, and the skill of its application. Milton said, "I am content to draw the pure golden ore from the mine, and I will not weaken it by over-polish."

The merit of Milton was, that he used his gigantic imagination to bring into play his immense knowledge. Heaven, Hell, Chaos, and the Earth, are stupendous subjects of contemplation: three of them we can conceive only by the strength of imagination; the fourth is partly exposed to our senses, but can be only dimly and partially viewed except through the same power. Who then shall dare to say, that the genius most fitted to delineate and illustrate these shadowy and evanescent wonders, and who has executed this work in a manner exceeding all human hope, has not performed the most instructive, as well as the most delightful of tasks? and who shall dare to deny that such a production ought to be made the universal study of the nation which brought it forth?

Before such a performance all technical beauties sink to nothing. The question is,—are the ideas mighty, and just, and authorised; and are they adequately expressed? If this is admitted, then ought not every one to read this poem next to the Bible? So thought Bishop Newton. But Johnson has the effrontery to assert, that though it may be read as a duty, it can give no pleasure: for this, Newton seems to have pronounced by anticipation the stigma due to him. Is any intellectual delight equal to that which a high and sensitive mind derives from the perusal of innumerable passages in every book of this inimitable work of poetical fiction?—The very story never relaxes: it is thick-wove with incident, as well as sentiment, and argumentative grandeur: and how it closes, when the archangel waves the 'flaming brand' over the eastern gate of Paradise; and, on looking back, Adam and Eve saw the 'dreadful faces' and 'fiery arms' that 'throng'd' round it!—In what other poem is any passage so heart-rending and so terrible as this?

PARADISE REGAINED.

The 'Paradise Regained' bears the same character, compared with the 'Paradise Lost,' as the New Testament bears, compared with the Old: it is more subdued, more didactic, more simple and less ornamented, more practical and less imaginative. The holy poet seems to have been awed by his subject, and to have given less of his own, either of thought, matter, or language: he appears rather the oracle or channel through which the voice of the Divinity speaks. There is less of human learning, but more than human wisdom;—less of that visionariness of dimly-embodied half-spiritual forms; and none of that gorgeous display of sublime creation, which the pictures everywhere abounding in 'Paradise Lost' exhibit. All in the 'Paradise Regained' wears a sober, serene majesty, like the mellow light of the moon in a calm autumnal evening.

It is true that the essence of poetry is not merely imagination or invention, but invention of a particular quality; and this belongs to the 'Paradise Lost' more than to the 'Paradise Regained:' as, for instance, to Satan's escape from hell, and his first sight of the newly-created globe of earth, and Adam and Eve placed in the enjoyment of it, than to the description of Christ's entry into the wilderness, and Satan in disguise first accosting him: but though the latter description is less grandly imaginative, it is still rich with invention, and invention which is truly poetical: still it is a representation of actual existences, though not a copy of them.

Milton is here pre-eminent in designing character and sentiment: his dialogue is supported with miraculous power and force; and its strength and sublimity shine out the more from the extreme plainness of the language; the task was perilous to find adequate arguments for the contest between the Divine Humanity and a devil. The reader who is not deeply moved, and deeply instructed by it, must be one of brutish and hopeless stupidity. I have said before, that I deemed it an unquestionable duty of every one who understands the English language to study Milton next to the Holy Writings: this remark more especially applies to the description of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. The 'Paradise Lost' is moral and didactic, but less so than the 'Paradise Regained.'

Satan tempts Christ first by the offer of sensual pleasures; then of riches; then of power; then of glory; and, last, of intellectual pleasures: but Warburton objects to these temptations conquered, as the means of 'Paradise Regained;' and asserts, that the poet ought to have dwelt on Christ's death and resurrection as the price paid for this redemption. He says:—

"Whether Milton supposed the redemption of mankind, as he here represents it, was procured by Christ's triumph over the devil in the wilderness; or whether he thought that the scene of the desert, opposed to that of Paradise; and the action of a temptation withstood, to a temptation fallen under, made 'Paradise Regained'

a more regular sequel to 'Paradise Lost;' or, if neither this nor that, whether it was his being tired out with the labour of composing 'Paradise Lost,' which made him averse to another work of length (and then he would never be at a loss for fanciful reasons to determine him in the choice of his plan), is very uncertain. All that we can be sure of is, that the plan is a very unhappy one, and defective even in that narrow view of a sequel; for it affords the poet no opportunity of driving the devil back again to hell from his new conquests in the air. In the mean time, nothing was easier than to have invented a good one, which should end with the resurrection; and to comprise these four books, somewhat contracted, in an episode; for which only the subject of them is fit."

Warburton was a man of great subtlety, force, and originality; but totally deficient in poetical taste. To have contracted the matter of these four books, would indeed have been a loss and a destruction. If the poem had been extended to the length of the 'Paradise Lost,' it might indeed have contained that of which Warburton charges the omission as a great defect: but as the poem now stands, it is a perfect whole in itself; and it is not improbable, that the poet found age and sickness too fast pressing upon him to make it longer.

It seems to me, that, in my preliminary remarks upon one of Milton's chief poems, I cannot do better than impress on the reader the peculiarity of the bard's genius, and endeavour to imbue him with a Miltonic taste; which is so distinct from that of all other poetry. That this is no fancy of my own, I can establish on the authority of Milton himself, and of the comments of two distinguished annotators.

I refer to the passage beginning v. 285 of b. iv. of 'Paradise Regained,' which contains Christ's answer to Satan's panegyric of human learning, beginning v. 236, describing Athens as the seat of all intellectual glory. Our Saviour answers, v. 309:—

Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending? &c., &c.

The poet goes on at v. 343:—

Remove their swelling epithets, thick laid
As varnish on an harlot's cheek; the rest,
Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is praised aright, and godlike men,
The holiest of holies, and his saints;
Such are from God inspired, not such from thee;
Unless where moral virtue is express'd
By light of nature, not in all quite lost.
Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
The top of eloquence; statists indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem;
But herein to our prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestick unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, keeps it so;
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat:
These only with our law best form a king.

Thyer observes here, that "this answer of our Saviour is as much to be admired for solid reasoning, and the many sublime truths contained in it, as the preceding speech of Satan is for that fine vein of poetry which runs through it: and one may observe in general, that Milton has quite, throughout this work, thrown the ornaments of poetry on the side of error: whether it was that he thought great truths best expressed in a grave, unaffected style; or intended to suggest this fine moral to the reader;—that simple naked truth will always be an over-match for falsehood, though recommended by the gayest rhetoric, and adorned with the most bewitching colours."

As to the inferiority of Grecian literature to the songs of Sion, Newton observes, that Milton was of this opinion, not only in the decline of life, but likewise in his earlier days, as appears from the Preface to his second book of 'The Reason of Church Government:'—"Or if occasion shall lead to imitate those magnific Odes and Hymns wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most and end faulty. But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable."

On this note Warton makes the following comment:—"But Milton now appears to have imbibed so strong a tincture of fanaticism, as to decry all human compositions and profane subjects. In the context he speaks with absolute contempt, even in a critical view; and a general disapprobation of the Greek odes and hymns. (Read ver. 343 to ver. 348.) Undoubtedly these were Milton's own sentiments, though delivered in an assumed character. Even in his own person he had long before given the substance of the context, as cited by Dr. Newton: it must, however, be observed that Christ is here answering Satan's speech, and counteracting his exquisite panegyric on the philosophers, poets, and orators of Athens; yet at the same time, I can conceive that Satan's speech, which here he means to confute, and which no man was more able to write than himself, came from the heart.* The writers of dialogue in feigned characters have great advantage."

The chief purpose for which I have introduced this criticism here is this,—that the reader may not look for what are thought the common ornaments or spells of poetry: he must look for stern truths; for sublime sentiments· for naked grandeur of imagery; for an absence of all the rhetorical flourishes of literary composition; for the dictates of a lofty and divine virtue; for a bold and gigantic dispersion of the veil from the delusions of human vanity; for the blaze of an Evil spirit eclipsed by the splendour of a Good and Divine Spirit, illumined by the lamp of Heaven.

But though a great part of the poem is intellectual and argumentative, another large portion is full of grand or beautiful imagery: the description of the wilderness at the opening abounds with sublime scenery: the picture of the storm at the close of the last book, with the bright morning which succeeded, may vie with any of the noblest passages in the 'Paradise Lost;' perhaps in expression, while it loses nothing of grandeur, it is more polished than any other to be found.

Milton intended this poem as the brief or didactic epic, of which he considered the book of Job to be a model, such as he notices in the second book of his 'Reason of Church Government.' "Milton," says Hayley, "had already executed one extensive divine poem, peculiarly distinguished by richness and sublimity of description: in framing a second he naturally wished to vary its effect; to make it

* Surely there is here something of inconsistency in Warton.

rich in moral sentiment, and sublime in its mode of unfolding the highest wisdom that man can learn: for this purpose it was necessary to keep all the ornamental parts of the poem in due subordination to the preceptive. This delicate and difficult point is accomplished with such felicity; they are blended together with such exquisite harmony and mutual aid; that, instead of arraigning the plan, we might rather doubt if any possible change could improve it. Assuredly, there is no poem of an epic form, where the sublimest moral is so forcibly and abundantly united to poetical delight: the splendour of the poem does not blaze indeed so intensely as in his larger production; here he resembles the Apollo of Ovid; softening his glory in speaking to his son; and avoiding to dazzle the fancy, that he may descend into the heart."

In another place, Hayley, having spoken of the "uncommon energy and felicity of composition in Milton's two poems, however different in design, dimension, and effect," adds,—"to censure the 'Paradise Regained,' because it does not more resemble the 'Paradise Lost,' is hardly less absurd, than it would be to condemn the moon for not being a sun; instead of admiring the two different luminaries, and feeling that both the greater and the less are equally the work of the same divine and inimitable Power."

"Yet this is the poem," says Dunster, "from which the ardent admirers of Milton's other works turn, as from a cold, uninteresting composition, the produce of his dotage, of a palsied hand no longer able to hold the pencil of poetry."

The origin of this poem is attributed to the suggestion of Ellwood, the quaker. Milton had lent this friend, in 1665, his 'Paradise Lost,' then completed in manuscript, at Chalfont, St. Giles'; desiring him to peruse it at his leisure, and give his judgment of it;—"which I modestly but freely told him," says Ellwood, in his Life of Himself; "and after some farther discourse of it, I pleasantly said to him, 'Thou hast said much of Paradise Lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise Found?' He made me no answer, but sat some time in a muse; then broke off that discourse, and fell upon another subject." When Ellwood afterwards waited on him in London, Milton showed him his 'Paradise Regained;' and, in a pleasant tone, said to him,—"This is owing to you; for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont; which before I had not thought of."

Milton, in the opening of this poem, speaking of his Muse, as prompted

> To tell of deeds
> Above heroick,

considers the subject of it, as well as of 'Paradise Lost,' to be of much greater dignity and difficulty than the argument of Homer and Virgil. But the difference here is, as Richardson observes, that he confines himself "to nature's bounds;" not as in the 'Paradise Lost,' where he soars "above the visible diurnal sphere:" and so far 'Paradise Regained' is less poetical because it is less imaginative.

"'Paradise Regained' has not met with the approbation it deserves," says Jortin: "it has not the harmony of numbers, the sublimity of thought, and the beauties of diction, which are in 'Paradise Lost:' it is composed in a lower and less striking style;—a style suited to the subject. Artful sophistry, false reasoning, set off in the most specious manner, and refuted by the Son of God with strong unaffected eloquence, is the peculiar excellence of this poem. Satan there defends a bad cause with great skill and subtlety, as one thoroughly versed in that craft—

> —— qui facere assuerat
> Candida de nigris, et de candentibus atra.

His character is well drawn."

BOOK I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE very outline of the subject of this book of sublime wisdom, argument, and eloquence, is of the highest character of poetry. Our Saviour, in a fit of meditative abstraction, and just beginning to feel his divinity from the signs imparted to him at the baptism of St. John, wanders into a desert and barren wilderness, where he loses himself, and fasts for forty days. There Satan encounters him, first in disguise; and, when detected, in his avowed name, to tempt him to his fall; as he had formerly successfully tempted Eve, and thus effected the ruin of the human race.

The descriptive parts are here only occasional; but when they do occur, they are magnificent and picturesque. The argumentative parts form the main matter. Satan argues with the wicked power of a rebellious and perverted angel; but Christ, feeling within him the growing illumination of his mighty mission, always overcomes him: yet the fiend is as subtle, crafty, flattering, and persuasive, as he is ingenious and vigorous. Our Saviour had yet scarcely plumed his wings; he was doubtful of his own strength; yet a secret Spirit from Heaven now whispered to him, that he was born for the trial. The dialogue is supported with amazing force and splendour on both sides: the mind of the profound reader is kept in anxious and trembling suspense. The flash of the demon comes strong and dazzling; then follows the sublime and overwhelming answer, which eclipses it at once; and which moves the soul and heart by its acute and moral grandeur, and its heroic self-denial.

But let it be remembered, that in addition to Satan's alarming artifices, our Saviour had to sustain hunger, thirst, want of shelter, loneliness in a desert of terrific gloominess, out of which he could not find his way: this gives the story a sort of breathless interest, in which the human imagination can find the strongest sympathy. As a divinity, we should not feel the same interest in the fate of the hero of this poem; unless he had, for the execution of his great mission, clothed himself with a nature which subjected him to all the evils of humanity.

The art with which the poet interests us in Satan himself, is miraculous: the demon's plausibilities sometimes almost make us pity him. His self-exculpations, his cunning arguments, to induce a belief that he means no ill-will to man, and that he has no interest in hating him, are invented with astonishing colour and wiliness: our Saviour's calm detection of Satan's sophistries is delightful and exalting. The reader, who feels in this no human sympathy; no glow at intellectual force; no electrification at the spell of mighty genius; no expansion of the brain; no light to the ideas; no elation and renovation of our fallen nature;—must be unspiritualised, and half-imbruted. If any man finds himself cold and dull at first, let him consider it a duty to endeavour by degrees to warm himself. The hardest ice will melt at last by the continual impulse of a glowing sun.

If the intellectual ingredients of this book,—or this poem,—were abstract, I could account for the vulgar distaste of it: but the whole has reference to the contest of characters, and to practical results: the whole is not only involved in a progressive story; but is partly, by its prevalence of dialogue, of a dramatic interest: the reader is kept in suspense for the event of the successive trials.

Is the mean nature of many individuals fallen so low, that they can recognise nothing of sentiment or thought which is noble and generous?—Will they call it improbable, exaggerated, and forced?—There may be poetry holding up a mirror to common life, which is harmless; but it is not virtuous, because it is of no use.

The mob perhaps like best to see their own likenesses; but it is often so far mischievous, that it is apt to confirm them in a complacency with their own follies. Our business is to improve our understandings, and exalt our hearts; to be taught to detect the delusions of sin and the devil; and to bear the sorrows and wrongs of life with a magnanimous fortitude. What poem does this like 'Paradise Regained?' What poem therefore ought we so to study, and become familiar with? The very authorities, on which its chief doctrines are built, are in themselves treasures of wisdom.

But I am at a loss to guess, what, even on the mere principles of poetry, there is of excellence wanting in this poem. Invention, character, sentiment, language,—all in a high degree,—cannot be denied it. Here is unbounded expanse of thought, and profundity of wisdom: here is all the moral eloquence, which is to be found in the noblest authors of antiquity: here is much of the essence of the inspired writings: here is what perhaps popular readers like best of all,—the most condensed and solid brevity: here is inexhaustible richness of thought combined with extreme plainness, and a scriptural simplicity of expression. I believe that no one ever read florid language for any number of pages without satiety and disgust.

Beautiful as the first book of the 'Paradise Regained' is, I think that the poem continues to rise to the last: here is the difficulty; but it would be a fault if it did not. This book is principally occupied in Satan's exculpation of himself: the other books set forth the fiend's temptations, both material and intellectual; and our Saviour's sublime arguments in answer to him.

The style with which the 'Paradise Regained' opens, is generally considered more sober, and less removed from its authorities, than that of the 'Paradise Lost;' and this is supposed to have partly arisen from the poet's awe of his subject, and partly from the weakness of rapidly declining age. With respect to the style, so far as it is more subdued (if it be so), I believe that it has purely been caused by the choice of his subject, and the plainer and simpler language of the New Testament, which disdains all ornament, and in which the story gives less scope to imagination. Where we are relating recorded facts, from which we dare not vary, our language is necessarily more controlled and tame.

I am only surprised at the boldness of the poet in choosing this sublime theme: he could not but have foreseen all its difficulties; but knowing his own perfect familiarity with the scriptural language, his gigantic mind hazarded the task. This alone is a proof that he was not conscious of any "failure of strength;" and there is not a single passage in the execution, which indicates any such failure: with whatever else compared of his immortal writings, the imagery is as distinct and picturesque; the spiritual part, the thoughts and arguments, are at least equally vigorous, original, discriminative, and profound, and perhaps more abundant: nor has the language less of that naked strength, which supports itself by its own intrinsic power.

ARGUMENT.*

THE subject proposed. Invocation of the Holy Spirit. The poem opens with John baptizing at the river Jordan: Jesus coming there is baptized; and is attested, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and by a voice from heaven, to be the Son of God. Satan, who is present, upon this immediately flies up into the regions of the air; where, summoning his infernal council, he acquaints them with his apprehensions that Jesus is that seed of the woman, destined to destroy all their power; and points out to them the immediate necessity of bringing the matter to proof, and of attempting, by snares and fraud, to counteract and defeat the person, from whom they have so much to dread; this office he offers himself to undertake; and, his offer being accepted, sets out on his enterprise. In the meantime, God, in the assembly of holy angels, declares that he has given up his Son to be tempted by Satan; but foretels that the tempter shall be completely defeated by him: upon which the angels sing a hymn of triumph. Jesus is led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, while he is

* No edition of 'Paradise Regained' had ever appeared with Arguments to the books, before that which was published in 1795 by Mr. Dunster; from which they are adopted in this edition. Peck, indeed, endeavoured to supply the deficiency, in his "Memoirs of Milton," 1740, p. 70, &c., but the Arguments, which he has there given, are too diffuse, and want that conciseness and energy which distinguish Mr. Dunster's.—TODD.

meditating on the commencement of his great office of Saviour of mankind. Pursuing his meditations, he narrates, in a soliloquy, what divine and philanthropic impulses he had felt from his early youth, and how his mother Mary, on perceiving these dispositions in him, had acquainted him with the circumstances of his birth, and informed him that he was no less a person than the Son of God; to which he adds what his own inquiries and reflections had supplied in confirmation of this great truth, and particularly dwells on the recent attestation of it at the river Jordan. Our Lord passes forty days, fasting, in the wilderness; where the wild beasts become mild and harmless in his presence. Satan now appears under the form of an old peasant; and enters into discourse with our Lord, wondering what could have brought him alone into so dangerous a place, and at the same time professing to recognise him for the person lately acknowledged by John, at the river Jordan, to be the Son of God. Jesus briefly replies. Satan rejoins with a description of the difficulty of supporting life in the wilderness; and entreats Jesus, if he be really the Son of God, to manifest his divine power, by changing some of the stones into bread. Jesus reproves him, and at the same time tells him that he knows who he is. Satan instantly avows himself, and offers an artful apology for himself and his conduct. Our blessed Lord severely reprimands him, and refutes every part of his justification. Satan, with much semblance of humility, still endeavours to justify himself; and, professing his admiration of Jesus and his regard for virtue, requests to be permitted at a future time to hear more of his conversation; but is answered, that this must be as he shall find permission from above. Satan then disappears, and the book closes with a short description of night coming on in the desert.

I, WHO erewhile[a] the happy garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost[b], now sing
Recover'd Paradise[c] to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste wilderness[d].

[a] *I, who erewhile.*

The proposition of the subject is clear and dignified, and is beautifully wound up in the concluding line:—

And Eden raised in the waste wilderness.—DUNSTER.

This is plainly an allusion to the "Ille ego qui quondam," &c., attributed to Virgil. Thus also Spenser:—

Lo, I the man, whose Muse whilom did mask,
As time her taught, in lowly shepherd's weeds,
And now enforced, a far unfitter task,
For trumpets stern to change mine oaten reeds, &c —NEWTON.

[b] *By one man's disobedience lost.*

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—Rom. v. 19.—NEWTON.

[c] *Recover'd Paradise.*

It may seem a little odd, that Milton should impute the recovery of Paradise to this short scene of our Saviour's life upon earth, and not rather extend it to his agony, crucifixion, &c.; but the reason no doubt was, that Paradise, regained by our Saviour's resisting the temptations of Satan, might be a better contrast to Paradise, lost by our first parents too easily yielding to the same seducing Spirit. Besides, he might, very probably, and indeed very reasonably, be apprehensive, that a subject, so extensive as well as sublime, might be too great a burden for his declining constitution, and a task too long for the short term of years he could then hope for. Even in his 'Paradise Lost,' he expresses his fears, lest he had begun too late, and lest "an age too late, or cold climate, or years, should have damped his intended wing;" and surely he had much greater cause to dread the same now, and to be very cautious of launching out too far.—THYER.

[d] *And Eden raised in the waste wilderness.*

There is, I think, a particular beauty in this line, when one considers the fine allusion in it to the curse brought upon the paradisiacal earth by the fall of Adam: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."—THYER.

See Isaiah li. 3.

Thou Spirit[e], who ledst this glorious eremite
Into the desert[f], his victorious field,
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont[g], my prompted song, else mute[h];
And bear, through highth or depth of Nature's bounds,
With prosperous wing full summ'd, to tell of deeds
Above heroick, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age;
Worthy to have not remain'd so long unsung.
Now had the great proclaimer, with a voice

[e] *Thou Spirit.*

This invocation is so supremely beautiful, that it is hardly possible to give the preference even to that in the opening of the 'Paradise Lost.' This has the merit of more conciseness. Diffuseness may be considered as lessening the dignity of invocations on such subjects.—DUNSTER.

[f] *Into the desert.*

It is said, Matt. iv. 1,—"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." And from the Greek original ἔρημος, the desert, and ἐρημίτης, an inhabitant of the desert, is rightly formed the word *eremite;* which was used before by Milton in his 'Paradise Lost,' b. iii. 474: and by Fairfax, in his translation of Tasso, c. xi. st. 4: and in Italian, as well as Latin, there is *eremita,* which the French, and we after them, contract into *hermite, hermit.*—NEWTON.

[g] *Inspire,*
As thou art wont.

See the very fine opening of the ninth book of the 'Paradise Lost,' and also his invocation of Urania, at the beginning of the seventh book: and in the introduction to the second book of the 'Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy,' where he promises to undertake something, he yet knows not what, that may be of use and honour to his country, he adds: "This is not to be obtained but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify whom he pleases." Here then we see that Milton's invocations of the Divine Spirit were not merely *exordia pro forma.* Indeed his prose works are not without their invocations. Compare also Tasso, "Il Mondo Creato," Giorn. Prim.

e langue
Se non m' inspiri tu, la voce, e 'l suono.—DUNSTER.

[h] *My prompted song, else mute.*

Milton's third wife, who survived him many years, related of him, that he used to compose his poetry chiefly in winter; and on his waking in a morning, would make her write down sometimes twenty or thirty verses. Being asked, whether he did not often read Homer and Virgil, she understood it as an imputation upon him for stealing from those authors, and answered with eagerness, "He stole from nobody but the Muse who inspired him:" and, being asked by a lady present who the Muse was, replied "It was God's grace, and the Holy Spirit, that visited him nightly."—Newton's Life of Milton. Mr. Richardson also says, that "Milton would sometimes lie awake whole nights, but not a verse could he make; and on a sudden his poetical fancy would rush upon him with an *impetus* or *œstrum.*"—Johnson's Life of Milton. "Else mute" might have been suggested by a passage of Horace's most beautiful ode to the Muse, IV. III:—

O testudinis aureæ
Dulcem quæ strepitum, Pieri, temperas!
O mutis quoque piscibus
Donatura cygni, si libeat, sonum!

or from Quinctilian:—"Ipsam igitur orandi majestatem, qua nihil Dii immortales melius homini dederunt, et qua remota muta sunt omnia, et luce præsenti et memoria posteritatis carent, toto animo petamus," l. xii. 11.—DUNSTER.

More awful than the sound of trumpet[i], cried
Repentance, and Heaven's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptized: to his great baptism flock'd
With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deem'd
To the flood Jordan; came, as then obscure,
Unmark'd, unknown; but him the Baptist soon
Descried, divinely warn'd[j], and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
To him his heavenly office; nor was long
His witness unconfirm'd: on him baptized
Heaven open'd, and in likeness of a dove
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From heaven pronounced him his beloved Son.
That heard, the adversary, who, roving still
About the world[k], at that assembly famed
Would not be last; and, with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, the exalted man, to whom
Such high attest was given[l], awhile survey'd
With wonder; then, with envy fraught and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty peers,
Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved[m],

[i] *With a voice*
More awful than the sound of trumpet.]

"Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions," Isaiah lviii. 1; and see Heb. xii. 18, 19.—DUNSTER.

[j] *But him the Baptist soon*
Descried, divinely warn'd.

John the Baptist had notice given him before, that he might certainly know the Messiah by the Holy Ghost descending and abiding upon him: "And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost," John i. 33. But it appears from St. Matthew, that the Baptist knew him, and acknowledged him before he was baptized, and before the Holy Ghost descended upon him, Matt. iii. 14. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" To account for which we must admit with Milton, that another divine revelation was made to him at this very time, signifying that this was the person of whom he had such notice before.—NEWTON.

The Baptist John carries us with the best effect *in medias res.*—DUNSTER.

[k] *Who, roving still*
About the world.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it," Job i. 7. See also 1 Pet. v. 8.—DUNSTER.

[l] *The exalted man, to whom*
Such high attest was given, &c.

The description how Satan is affected by this divine attestation of Jesus is admirable: his involuntary admiration is consistent with his knowledge of what is good and amiable (see ver. 379); his envy and rage are truly Satanic, and becoming his character of the enemy of all good.—DUNSTER.

[m] *Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved.*

Milton, in making Satan's residence to be "in mid air, within thick clouds and dark," seems to have St. Austin in his eye; who, speaking of the region of clouds,

A gloomy consistory [n]; and them amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake:
O ancient powers of air, and this wide world [o]
(For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember hell,
Our hated habitation); well ye know,
How many ages, as the years of men,
This universe we have possess'd, and ruled,
In manner at our will, the affairs of earth,
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise, deceived by me; though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heaven
Delay, for longest time to him is short [p]:

storms, thunder, &c., says, "ad ista caliginosa, id est, ad hunc aërem, tanquam ad carcerem, damnatus est diabolus," &c. "Enarr. in Ps." 148, s. 9, tom. 5, p. 1677, edit. Bened.—THYER.

[n] *A gloomy consistory.*

This is in imitation of Virg., Æn. iii. 677:

Cernimus astantes nequicquam lumine torvo
Ætnæos fratres, cœlo capita alta ferentes,
Concilium horrendum.

By the word "consistory," I suppose Milton intends to glance at the meeting of the pope and cardinals so named, or perhaps at the episcopal tribunal, to all which sorts of courts or assemblies he was an avowed enemy. The phrase *concilium horrendum*, Vida makes use of upon a like occasion of assembling the infernal powers, "Christ." lib 1.

Protinus acciri diros ad regia fratres
Limina, concilium horrendum.

And Tasso also, in the very same manner, "Gier. Lib." c. iv. st. 2:—

Che sia commanda il popol suo raccolto
(Concilio horrendo) entro la regia soglia.—THYER.

[o] *O ancient powers of air, and this wide world.*

So the devil is called in Scripture "The prince of the power of the air," Eph. ii. 2; and evil spirits are termed the "rulers of the darkness of this world," Eph. vi. 12. Satan here summons a council, and opens it as he did in the 'Paradise Lost;' but here is not that copiousness and variety which is in the other; here are not different speeches and sentiments adapted to the different characters; it is a council without a debate; Satan is the only speaker: and the author, as if conscious of this defect, has artfully endeavoured to obviate the objection, by saying that their danger

Admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be opposed:

and afterwards,

No time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief.

The true reason is, he found it impossible to exceed or equal the speeches in his former council, and therefore has assigned the best reason he could for not making any in this.—NEWTON.

They who have been taught to think, by the cant of common critics, that this poem is unworthy of the great genius of Milton, may read the first two speeches in it; this of Satan, with which the poem judiciously opens; and that of God, at ver. 130 of this book.—JOS. WARTON.

[p] *Long the decrees of Heaven*
Delay, for longest time to him is short.

This observation, that "the decrees of Heaven are long delayed," must be understood as being limited to this particular instance; or to its being sometimes, not always

And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long-threaten'd wound,
At least, if so we can; and, by the head
Broken, be not intended all our power
To be infringed, our freedom and our being,
In this fair empire won of earth and air:
For this ill news I bring[q]; the woman's Seed,
Destined to this, is late of woman born:
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause;
But his growth now to youth's full flower, displaying
All virtue, grace, and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the consecrated stream
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them, so
Purified, to receive him pure[r]; or rather
To do him honour as their King: all come,
And he himself among them was baptized;
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony of Heaven, that who he is
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt. I saw
The prophet do him reverence; on him, rising
Out of the water, Heaven above the clouds
Unfold her crystal doors[s]; thence on his head

so. Why any interval should ever occur between the decrees of the Almighty and his execution of them, a reason is immediately subjoined, which forms a peculiarly fine transition to the succeeding sentence. Time is as nothing to the Deity; long and short having, in fact, no existence to a Being with whom all duration is present: time to human beings has its stated measurement, and by this Satan has just before estimated it:—

How many ages, as the years of men,
This universe we have possess'd.

Time to guilty beings, human or spiritual, passes so quick, that the hour of punishment, however protracted, always comes too soon:—

And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long-threaten'd wound.—DUNSTER.

[q] *For this ill news I bring, &c.*

In the fourth act of the "Adamo," of Andreini, Lucifer similarly announces the incarnation to the demons.—DUNSTER.

[r] *Purified, to receive him pure.*

1 John, iii. 3. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."—NEWTON.

[s] *Heaven above the clouds*
Unfold her crystal doors.

It is the same idea in the 'Ode on the Nativity,' st. 13:—"Ring out, ye crystal spheres:" and in the Latin ode, 'Præsul. Elien.' ver. 63:—

Donec nitentes ad fores
Ventum est Olympi, et regiam crystallinam.

Compare also 'Paradise Lost,' vi. 771:—

He on the wings of seraphs rode sublime
On the crystalline sky.

A perfect dove descend [t] (whate'er it meant),
And out of Heaven the sovran voice I heard,—
This is my Son beloved,—in him am pleased.
His mother then is mortal, but his Sire
He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven:
And what will he not do to advance his Son?
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep [u].
Who this is we must learn [v]; for man he seems
In all his lineaments; though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be opposed
(Not force, but well-couch'd fraud, well-woven snares [w]),
Ere in the head of nations he appear,
Their king, their leader, and supreme on earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal expedition [x], to find out
And ruin Adam; and the exploit perform'd
Successfully; a calmer voyage now

Again, b. i. 741:—

Thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements.

See also b. vi. 756, 860. Milton's "crystal battlements" are in the imagery of romance: the "crystalline sphere" is from the Ptolemaic or Gothic system of astronomy, 'Paradise Lost,' iii. 482: and so perhaps Spenser, "Tears of the Muses:"—

For hence we mount aloft into the skie,
And look into the crystall firmament.—T. WARTON.

[t] *A perfect dove descend.*

He had expressed it before, ver. 30, "in likeness of a dove," agreeably to St. Matthew, "the Spirit of God descending like a dove," iii. 16, and to St. Mark, "the Spirit like a dove descending upon him," i. 10. But as Luke says, that "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape," iii. 22, the poet supposes, with Tertullian, Austin, and others of the fathers, that it was a real dove, as the painters always represent it.—NEWTON.

[u] *And sore have felt,*
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep.

In reference to the sublime description, in the 'Paradise Lost,' of the Messiah driving the rebel angels out of heaven, b. vi. 834, &c.—DUNSTER.

[v] *Who this is we must learn.*

Our author favours the opinion of those writers, Ignatius and others among the ancients, and Beza and others among the moderns, who believed that the devil, though he might know Jesus to be some extraordinary person, yet knew him not to be the Messiah, the Son of God.—NEWTON.

It was requisite for the poet to assume this opinion, as it is a necessary hinge on which part of the poem turns.—DUNSTER.

[w] *Well-woven snares.*

Thus Spenser, "Astrophel," st. 17:—

There his well-woven toils, and subtle traines
He laid, &c.—DUNSTER.

[x] *I, when no other durst, sole undertook*
The dismal expedition, &c.

The fear and unwillingness of the other fallen angels to undertake this dismal expedition, is particularly described in the 'Paradise Lost,' b. ii. 420, &c.—DUNSTER.

Will waft me[y]; and the way, found prosperous once,
Induces best to hope of like success.
He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to the infernal crew,
Distracted and surprised with deep dismay
At these sad tidings; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprise
To him, their great dictator[z], whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thrived
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents, and potentates, and kings, yea, gods,
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan[a] he directs
His easy steps[b], girded with snaky wiles[c],
Where he might likeliest find this new-declared,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try;
So to subvert whom he suspected raised

[y] *A calmer voyage now*
Will waft me.

Thus, in 'Paradise Lost,' b. ii. 1041, where Satan begins to emerge out of chaos, it is said the remainder of the journey became so much easier,

That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave.—DUNSTER.

[z] *To him, their great dictator.*

Milton applies this title very properly to Satan in his present situation; as the authority he is now vested with is quite dictatorial, and the expedition on which he is going of the utmost consequence to the fallen angels.—THYER.

[a] *To the coast of Jordan.*

The wilderness, where our Saviour underwent his forty days' temptation, was on the same bank of Jordan where the baptism of John was; St. Luke witnessing it, that Jesus being now baptized, "returned from Jordan."—NEWTON.

[b] *His easy steps.*

In reference, as Dr. Newton has observed, to the calmness or easiness of his present expedition, compared with the danger and difficulty of his former one to ruin mankind. Accordingly, Satan in the conclusion of his speech had said

A calmer voyage now
Shall waft me.—DUNSTER.

[c] *Girded with snaky wiles.*

"Girded with snaky wiles" alludes to the habits of sorcerers and necromancers, who are represented in some prints as girded about the middle with the skins of snakes and serpents.—NEWTON.

This being "girt about with a girdle of snakes," puts us in mind, says Warburton, of the instrument of the Fall. Surely this interpretation is a far-sought and groundless refinement; as is also the remark on ver. 310, of the wild beasts growing mild at our Saviour's appearance as a mark of the returning paradisiacal state.—JOS. WARTON.

"Girded" here seems used only in a metaphorical sense; as in Scripture, the Christian, properly armed, is described having his "loins girt about with truth," Ephes. vi. 14. "Girded with snaky wiles" is equivalent to the "dolis instructus" of Virgil, Æn. ii. 152. Thus also, at the beginning of the third book of this poem, Satan is described,

At length collecting all his serpent wiles.—DUNSTER.

To end his reign on earth, so long enjoy'd:
But, contrary, unweeting he fulfill'd
The purposed counsel, preordain'd and fix'd,
Of the Most High; who, in full frequence bright
Of angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake [d]:
  Gabriel, this day by proof thou shalt behold,
Thou and all angels conversant on earth
With man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message, late
On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son,
Great in renown, and call'd the Son of God;
Then told'st her [e], doubting how these things could be
To her a virgin, that on her should come

[d] *Thus to Gabriel smiling spake.*

This speech is properly addressed to Gabriel, among the angels; as he seems to have been the angel particularly employed in the embassies and transactions relating to the Gospel. Gabriel was sent to inform Daniel of the famous prophecy of the seventy weeks; Gabriel notified the conception of John the Baptist to his father Zacharias, and of our blessed Saviour to his Virgin Mother. The Jewish Rabbis say that Michael was the minister of severity, but Gabriel of mercy: accordingly, our poet makes Gabriel the guardian angel of Paradise, and employs Michael to expel our first parents out of Paradise: and for the same reason this speech is directed to Gabriel in particular.—NEWTON.

Tasso, speaking of Gabriel, who is the messenger of the Deity to Godfrey, in the opening of "Gierusalemme Liberata," says:—

E tra Dio questi e l'anime migliori
Interprete fedel, nuncio giocondo:
Giù i decreti del ciel porta, ed al cielo
Riporta dè mortali i preghi, e 'l zelo.—DUNSTER.

Smiling is here no casual expletive: it is a word of infinitely fine effect, and is particularly meant to contrast the description of Satan, in the preceding part of the book, where, in his "gloomy consistory" of infernal peers, it is said,

With looks aghast and sad he thus bespake.

The benevolent smile of the Deity is finely described by Virgil, Æn. i. 254:—

Olli subridens hominum sator atque Deorum,
Vultu, quo cœlum tempestatesque serenat.—DUNSTER.

Satan's infernal council is briefly but finely assembled; his speech is admirable, and the effect of it is strongly depicted. This is strikingly contrasted by the succeeding beautiful speech of the Deity surrounded by his angels; his speech to them, and the triumphant hymn of the celestial choir. Indeed, the whole opening of this poem is executed in so masterly a manner, that, making allowance for a certain wish to compress, which is palpably visible, very few parts of 'Paradise Lost' can in any respect claim a pre-eminence.—DUNSTER.

[e] *Then told'st her.*

Milton, sometimes, from a wish to compress, latinises, so as to obscure and confuse his language considerably. The sense which he intends here, is plainly "thou told'st her," &c.; so that "told'st" is used here as equivalent to the Latin *dixisti*, with its pronominal nominative understood; but which our language positively requires to be expressed, unless where the verb is connected by a conjunction with some other verb dependent on the same pronoun. He has adopted the same mode of writing in other places; particularly ver. 221 of this book,

Yet held it more humane, &c.,

where the passage is perfectly confused for want of the pronoun *I*. See also ver. 85 of this book. We may in this respect apply to our author what Cicero has said of the ancient orators:—"Grandes erant verbis, crebri sententiis, compressione rerum breves, et ob eam ipsam causam interdum subobscuri," Brutus, 29. ed. Proust.—DUNSTER.

The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
O'ershadow her. This man, born and now upgrown,
To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan: let him tempt and now assay
His utmost subtlety; because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostacy[f]: he might have learnt
Less overweening, since he fail'd in Job[g],
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man,
Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to hell;
Winning, by conquest, what the first man lost,
By fallacy surprised. But first I mean
To exercise him in the wilderness:
There he shall first lay down the rudiments
Of his great warfare[h], ere I send him forth
To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,
By humiliation and strong sufferance:
His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength[i],
And all the world[j], a mass of sinful flesh;

[f] *Because he boasts*
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostacy.

This alludes to what Satan had just before said to his companions, ver. 100:—

I, when no other durst, sole undertook, &c.—THYER.

[g] *Fail'd in Job.*

See the opening of Job, whom God permitted Satan to try: a noble subject for an epic, which Milton seems once to have thought of. Young's attempt is a miserable failure.

[h] *The rudiments*
Of his great warfare.

Virg., Æn. xi. 156.

Primitiæ juvenis miseræ! bellique propinqui
Dura rudimenta!

And Statius, Sylv. v. ii. 3.

Quod si militiæ jam te, puer inclyte, primæ
Clara rudimenta, et castrorum dulce vocaret
Auspicium.—DUNSTER.

[i] *His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength.*

Thus in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, c. i. ver. 27:—"And God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

But the proper reference here is more probably to the second verse of the eighth Psalm:—"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies: and that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." This Psalm is considered by commentators as a ψαλμὸς ἐπινίκιος: Bishop Patrick supposes it to have been composed by David after his victory over Goliath, "which," he adds, "was a lively emblem of Christ's conquest over our great enemy."—DUNSTER.

[j] *And all the world.*

"I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33.—DUNSTER.

That all the angels and ethereal powers,
They now, and men hereafter, may discern,
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit call'd my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men[k].
So spake the Eternal Father, and all heaven
Admiring stood a space[l]; then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures moved,
Circling the throne and singing[m], while the hand
Sung with the voice[n], and this the argument:

[k] *That all the angels and ethereal powers,*
They now, and men hereafter, may discern,
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit call'd my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men.

Not a word is here said of the Son of God but what a Socinian would allow. His divine nature is artfully concealed under a partial and ambiguous representation: and the angels are first to learn the mystery of the incarnation from that important conflict, which is the subject of this poem: they are seemingly invited to behold the triumphs of the man Christ Jesus over the enemy of mankind; and these surprise them with the glorious discovery of the God,

enshrined
In fleshly tabernacle and human form.

The Father, speaking to his Eternal Word, 'Paradise Lost,' b. iii. 308, on his generous undertaking for mankind, saith,

and hast been found
By merit, more than birthright, Son of God.—CALTON.

On a frequent perusal and thorough consideration of this passage, I cannot forbear being of Mr. Calton's opinion, that there is not a word here said of the Son of God, but what a Socinian, or at least an Arian, would allow. The same observation may be made on some other remarkable passages of this poem.—JOS. WARTON.

[l] *So spake the Eternal Father, and all heaven*
Admiring stood a space.

We cannot but notice the great art of the poet, in setting forth the dignity and importance of his subject. He represents all beings as interested one way or other in the event. A council of devils is summoned; an assembly of angels is held: Satan is the speaker in the one; the Almighty in the other. Satan expresses his diffidence, but still resolves to make trial of this Son of God; the Father declares his purpose of proving and illustrating his Son. The infernal crew are distracted and surprised with deep dismay; all heaven stands awhile in admiration. The fiends are silent through fear and grief; the angels burst forth into singing with joy and the assured hope of success; and their attention is thus engaged, the better to engage the attention of the reader.—NEWTON.

[m] *Then into hymns*
Burst forth, and in celestial measures moved,
Circling the throne and singing.

Milton, we may suppose, had here in his mind the ancient chorus. In his original plan of the 'Paradise Lost,' under a dramatic form, he proposed to introduce a chorus of angels. The drama seems to have been his favourite species of poetry, and that which particularly caught and occupied his imagination: so at least we may judge from the numerous plans of tragedies which he left behind him. Indeed he has frequent allusions to dramatic compositions in all his works.—DUNSTER.

Milton, perhaps, at this time, had in mind Dante's representation of the angels formed into choirs, and singing praises to the Eternal Father, in his "Paradiso," c. xxviii.—TODD.

[n] *While the hand*
Sung with the voice.

We have nearly the same phrase in Tibullus, iii. iv. 41:—

Sed postquam fuerant digiti cum voce locuti,
Edidit hæc dulci tristia verba modo.

Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
Now entering his great duel [o], not of arms,
But to vanquish [p] by wisdom hellish wiles!
The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of hell;
And, devilish machinations, come to naught!
So they in heaven their odes and vigils tuned:
Meanwhile the Son of God [q], who yet some days

The word *hand* is used again in this poem, b. iv. 254, to distinguish instrumental harmony from vocal:—

> There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
> Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
> By voice or hand.

Also in the 'Arcades,' v. 77:—

> If my inferiour hand or voice could hit
> Inimitable sounds.—CALTON.

So in Lucretius, iv. 588:—

> Chordarumque sonos fieri, dulcesque querelas,
> Tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum.

Cano signifies not only "to sing," but also to "perform on any instrument." Thus, Ovid, "Ex. Pont." I. i. 39:—

> Ante deum Martem cornu tibicen adunco
> Cum canit.—DUNSTER.

[o] *Now entering his great duel.*

If it be not a contradiction, it is at least inaccurate in Milton, to make an angel say in 'Paradise Lost,' b. xii. 386:—"Dream not of their fight as of a duel;" and afterwards to make the angels express it here in the metaphor of a duel.—NEWTON.

There is, I think, a meanness in the customary sense of the word "duel," that makes it unworthy of these speakers, and of this occasion. The Italian *duello*, if I am not mistaken, bears a stronger sense, and this I suppose Milton had in view.—THYER.

Milton might rather be supposed to look to the Latin; where *duellum* is equivalent to *bellum*. See Hor. Ep. I. ii. 6, and Ode IV. xiv. 18. But "duel" here is used by our author in its most common acceptation of single combat; and "now entering his great duel" means "now entering the lists to prove, in personal combat with his avowed antagonist and apellant, the reality of his own divinity." See verse 130 of this book. In the opening of this poem we may notice allusions to the duel, or trial by combat. See verse 5, &c.; and verse 8–11. Indeed, the 'Paradise Regained' absolutely exhibits the temptation of our blessed Saviour in the light of a duel, or personal contest, between him and the arch-enemy of mankind, in which our Lord, by his divine patience, fortitude, and resignation, to the will of his heavenly Father, vanquishes the wiles of the devil. He thereby attests his own superiority over his antagonist, and his ability to restore the lost happiness of mankind, by regaining Paradise for them, and by rescuing and redeeming them from that power which had led them captive.—DUNSTER.

[p] *But to vanquish.*

Milton lays the accent on the last syllable in "vanquish," as elsewhere in "triumph;" and in many places he imitates the Latin and Greek prosody, and makes a vowel long before two consonants.—JORTIN.

I scan this line differently, so as not to lay the accent on the last syllable:—

> Būt tŏ | vānquĭsh bȳ | wīsdŏm | hēllĭsh | wīles.

[q] *So they in heaven their odes and vigils tuned:*
Meanwhile the Son of God.

How nearly does the poet here adhere to the same way of speaking which he had used in 'Paradise Lost,' on the same occasion, b. iii. 416!—

Lodged in Bethabara, where John baptized[r],
Musing, and much revolving in his breast[s],
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
Publish his godlike office now mature,
One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading;
And his deep thoughts[t], the better to converse
With solitude[u], till, far from track of men[v],
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
He enter'd now the bordering desert wild;
And, with dark shades and rocks environ'd round[w],
His holy meditations thus pursued:

Thus they in heaven, above the starry sphere,
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
Meanwhile upon the firm opacous globe
Of this round world, &c.—THYER.

Vigils tuned.—This is a very uncommon expression, and not easy to be understood; unless we suppose, that by vigils, the poet means those songs which they sung while they kept their watches. Singing of hymns is their manner of keeping their wakes in heaven: and I see no reason why their evening service may not be called vigils, as their morning service is called matins.—NEWTON.

The evening service in the Roman Catholic churches is called vespers. There was formerly a nocturnal service, called vigils, or nocturns, which was chanted and accompanied with music. Ducange explains *vigiliæ*, "ipsum officium nocturnum quod in vigiliis nocturnis olim decantabatur."—The old writers often speak of the *vigiliarum cantica*.—DUNSTER.

[r] *Who yet some days*
Lodged in Bethabara, where John baptized.

The poet, I presume, said this upon the authority of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, where certain particulars, which happened several days together, are related concerning the Son of God; and it is said, ver. 28—"These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing."—NEWTON.

[s] *Much revolving in his breast.*

Virg. Æn. x. 890:—"Multa movens animo."—DUNSTER.

[t] *One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading;*
And his deep thoughts.

In what fine light does Milton here place that text of Scripture, where it is said that "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness!" He adheres strictly to the inspired historian, and at the same time gives it a turn which is extremely poetical.—THYER.

[u] *The better to converse*
With solitude.

So, in 'Comus,' v. 375:—

Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude.—DUNSTER.

But the poet here perhaps alludes to the sacred text, where it is said of our Saviour, that, "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed," Mark i. 35.—TODD.

[v] *Far from track of men.*

Sophocl. Philoct. ver. 493:—Χωρὶς ἀνθρώπων στίβου.—DUNSTER.

[w] *He enter'd now the bordering desert wild;*
And, with dark shades and rocks environ'd round.

The wilderness in which John "preached the gospel," and where "Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to him, and were baptized in Jordan," we are expressly told by St. Matthew, iii. 1, was "the wilderness of Judea; which extended from the river Jordan all along the western side of the As-

O, what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compared!
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing[x]; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth[y],
All righteous things! therefore, above my years,
The law of God I read, and found it sweet,

phaltic Lake, or Dead Sea. The different parts of this wilderness had different names, from the neighbouring cities or mountains: thus, 1 Sam. xxiii, 14, it is called the "wilderness of Ziph," and xxiv. 1, the "wilderness of Engaddi." The word in Scripture which in our version is rendered "wilderness" or "desert," does not mean a country absolutely barren or uninhabited, but only uncultivated. Indeed, in the fifteenth chapter of Joshua, where the cities of Judah are enumerated, we read of six cities "in the wilderness:" of these, Engaddi stood nearest to the river Jordan, and the northern end of the Dead Sea. The Desert, where Milton, following what could be collected from Scripture, now places our Lord, we may suppose then to be that part of the wilderness of Judea in the neighbourhood of Engaddi. The wilderness, or uncultivated parts of Judea, appear chiefly to have been forests and woods, *loca saltuosa et sylvosa*. (See Reland's "Palæstina," l. i. c. 56, "de locis incultis et sylvis Palæstinæ.") About Engaddi also there were many mountains and rocks. David is described, 1 Sam. xxiii. 29, dwelling "in strongholds at Engaddi;" and of Saul, when in pursuit of him, xxiv, 2, it is said that "he went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats." The "bordering desert" then is the rocky uncultivated forest-country nearest to that part of Jordan where John had been baptizing; and our Lord is accordingly, with the greatest accuracy of description, there represented, as entering

now the bordering desert wild,
And, with dark shades and rocks environ'd round.

It should be observed, that D'Anville, in the map of Palestine, in his "Géographie Ancienne," has laid down Bethabara wrong. He places it towards the northern end of that part of Jordan which flows from the lake of Genezaret into the Dead Sea: and on the eastern bank of the river; almost opposite Enon. But it is nearly certain, that it really stood, as Bishop Pearce supposes (see his note on John i. 28), at the southern end of the river Jordan, on the western bank; and within a little distance of the wilderness, being only a very few miles from the Dead Sea.—DUNSTER.

[x] *When I was yet a child, no childish play*
To me was pleasing.

How finely and consistently, as Mr. Thyer observes, does Milton here imagine the youthful meditations of our Saviour! Dr. Jortin was of opinion, that Milton might here allude to Callimachus' account of Jupiter's infantine disposition, "Hymn in Jov." v. 56. Dr. Newton produced a similar description of Demophilus by Pindar, "Pyth." Od. iv. 501; and Mr. Dunster refers to an apposite passage in Plutarch's "Life of Cato." But the conclusion, made by Dr. Newton, still applies:—"Our author might allude to those passages, but he certainly did allude to the words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, only inverting the thought, 'When I was a child, I spake as a child,'" &c.—TODD.

If we may be allowed to apply these words of our Saviour to a mere uninspired being, I may call to recollection, that this was said of our poet Gray, as well as of Milton himself.

[y] *Myself I thought*
Born to that end, born to promote all truth.

Alluding to our Saviour's words, John xviii. 37:—"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."—NEWTON.

Made it my whole delight[a], and in it grew
To such perfection, that, ere yet my age
Had measured twice six years[a], at our great feast
I went into the temple, there to hear
The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own;
And was admired by all[b]: yet this not all
To which my spirit aspired; victorious deeds
Flamed in my heart, heroic acts; one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke;
Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth,
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power[c],
Till truth were freed, and equity restored:
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first[d]
By winning words to conquer willing hearts[e],
And make persuasion do the work of fear;
At least to try, and teach the erring soul,
Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware
Misled; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,

[a] *The law of God I read, and found it sweet,*
Made it my whole delight.

"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Psalm cxix. 103:—"But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night," Psalm i. 2.—DUNSTER.

[a] *Ere yet my age*
Had measured twice six years.

The following verses of Statius bear a resemblance, not only to this immediate passage, but also to some of the preceding lines, Sylv. v. ii. 12:—

Octonos bis jam tibi circuit annos
Vita; sed angustis animus robustior annis,
Succumbitque oneri, et mentem sua non capit ætas.—DUNSTER.

[b] *And was admired by all.*

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers," Luke ii. 47.—NEWTON.

[c] *Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth,*
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power.

Milton here carries his republican principles to the greatest height, in supposing the overthrow of all monarchy to have been one of the objects of our Lord's early contemplations. We may compare his 'Samson Agonistes,' v. 1268, &c.—DUNSTER.

[d] *Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first.*

The true spirit of toleration breathes in these lines; and the sentiment is very fitly put into the mouth of Him, who "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." —NEWTON.

[e] *By winning words to conquer willing hearts.*

Virgil, Georg. iv. 561:—

Victorque volentes
Per populos dat jura.—JORTIN.

Dr. Newton has commended the alliteration of *w's* in this line. Alliteration not too frequently repeated, undoubtedly gives sometimes force and energy to a line; but surely several of our late writers carry it to a nauseous and unwarrantable length. Of all writers, Dryden seems to be most happy in the temperate and proper use of alliteration; but he has scarcely ever more than three words in a line that begin with the same letter.—JOS. WARTON.

By words at times cast forth, inly rejoiced[f],
And said to me apart:—High are thy thoughts,
O Son, but nourish them, and let them soar
To what highth sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high:
By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire.
For know, thou art no son of mortal man,
Though men esteem thee low of parentage;
Thy Father is the Eternal King who rules
All heaven and earth, angels and sons of men:
A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceived in me a virgin; he foretold
Thou shouldst be great, and sit on David's throne,
And of thy kingdom there should be no end[g].
At thy nativity, a glorious quire
Of angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
To shepherds, watching at their folds by night[h],
And told them the Messiah now was born,
Where they might see him, and to thee they came,
Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,
For in the inn was left no better room:
A star, not seen before, in heaven appearing,
Guided the wise men thither from the east,
To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold[i];
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy star, new-graven in heaven,

[f] *Inly rejoiced.*

Virgil, Æn. i. 502:—

Latonæ tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus.—JORTIN.

The reader should recollect, that the occasion of the above verse, which is finely descriptive of maternal delight, was the distinguishing personal grace and divine appearance of Diana on the banks of Eurotas, surrounded by her nymphs; among whom

Illa pharetram
Fert humero, gradiensque Deas supereminet omnes.—DUNSTER.

[g] *He foretold*
Thou shouldst be great, and sit on David's throne,
And of thy kingdom there should be no end.

See Luke i. 32, 33.—DUNSTER.

[h] *At thy nativity, a glorious quire*
Of angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
To shepherds, watching at their folds by night, &c.

See 'Paradise Lost,' b. xii. 364:—

His place of birth a solemn angel tells
To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night:
They gladly thither haste, and by a quire
Of squadron'd angels hear his carol sung.—DUNSTER.

[i] *A star, not seen before, in heaven appearing,*
Guided the wise men thither from the east,
To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold.

So in 'Paradise Lost,' b. xii. 360:—

Yet at his birth a star,
Unseen before in heaven, proclaims him come,
And guides the Eastern sages, who inquire
His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold.—DUNSTER.

By which they knew thee King of Israel born.
Just Simeon and prophetick Anna[j], warn'd
By vision, found thee in the temple, and spake,
Before the altar and the vested priest[k],
Like things of thee to all that present stood.—
This having heard[l], straight I again revolved
The law and prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found, of whom they spake,
I am[m]; this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard essay, ev'n to the death,
Ere I the promised kingdom can attain,
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins'
Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head[n].
Yet, neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
The time prefix'd I waited; when behold
The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,

[j] *Just Simeon and prophetick Anna.*

It may not be improper to remark how strictly our Author adheres to the Scripture history, not only in the particulars which he relates, but also in the very epithets which he affixes to the persons; as here "just Simeon," because it is said, Luke ii. 25, "and the same man was just:" and "prophetick Anna," because it is said, Luke ii. 36, "and there was one Anna, a prophetess." The like accuracy may be observed in all the rest of this speech.—NEWTON.

[k] *The vested priest.*

The epithet "vested" is singularly proper, because the vestments of the Jewish priest were enjoined, and particularly described, by God himself; and, unless habited in them, the ministration of the priest at the altar was illegal, and expressly forbidden under the penalty of "bearing his iniquity," Exod. xxviii. 43.—HURD.

[l] *This having heard.*

The brief description of our Lord's entering "now the bordering desert wild, and with dark shades and rocks environ'd round;" and again, where, looking round on every side, he beholds "a pathless desert dusk with horrid shades," are scenes worthy of the pencil of Salvator. Our Lord's soliloquy is a material part of the poem, and briefly relates the early part of his life. In the 'Paradise Lost,' where the divine persons are speakers, Milton has so chastened his pen, that we meet with few poetical images, and chiefly scriptural sentiments, delivered, as near as may be, in scriptural and almost always in unornamented language. But the poet seems to consider this circumstance of the temptation (if I may venture so to express myself) as the last perfect completion of the initiation of the man Jesus in the mystery of his own divine nature and office: at least, himself entitled to make our Saviour, while on earth, and "enshrined in earthly tabernacle," speak in a certain degree ἀνθρωπίνως, or, *after the manner of men.* Accordingly, all the speeches of our blessed Lord in this poem, are far more elevated than any language that is put into the mouth of the divine speakers in any part of the 'Paradise Lost.' The ingrafting Mary's speech into that of her son, it must be allowed, is not a happy circumstance. It has an awkward effect, loads the rest of the speech, and might have been avoided and better managed. —DUNSTER.

[m] *And soon found, of whom they spake,*
I am.

The Jews thought that the Messiah, when he came, would be without all power and distinction, and unknown even to himself, till Elias had anointed and declared him. See Just. Mart. "Dial. cum Tryph." p. 266, ed Col.—CALTON.

[n] *Whose sins'*
Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.

Isaiah liii. 6:—"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."—NEWTON.

Not knew by sight[o]), now come, who was to come
Before Messiah, and his way prepare!
I, as all others, to his baptism came,
Which I believe was from above; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaim'd
Me him (for it was shown him so from Heaven),
Me him, whose harbinger he was; and first
Refused on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won:
But, as I rose out of the laving stream[p],
Heaven open'd her eternal doors[q], from whence
The Spirit descended on me like a dove;
And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from heaven, pronounced me his,
Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
He was well pleased; by which I knew the time
Now full[r], that I no more should live obscure;
But openly begin, as best becomes,
The authority which I derived from Heaven.
And now by some strong motion I am led
Into this wilderness, to what intent
I learn not yet; perhaps I need not know;
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals[s].

[o] *Not knew by sight.*

Though Jesus and John the Baptist were related, yet they were brought up in different countries, and had no manner of intimacy or acquaintance with each other. John the Baptist says expressly, John i. 31, 33:—"And I knew him not." He did not so much as know him by sight, till our Saviour came to his baptism; and afterwards it doth not appear that they ever conversed together.—NEWTON.

[p] *Out of the laving stream.*

Alluding to the phrase "laver of regeneration," so frequently applied to baptism. It may be observed in general of this soliloquy of our Saviour, that it is not only excellently well adapted to the present condition of the divine speaker, but also very artfully introduced by the poet, to give us a history of his hero from his birth to the very scene with which the poem is opened.—THYER.

[q] *Eternal doors.*

So in Psal. xxiv. 7, 9:—"Everlasting doors." And 'Paradise Lost,' b. vii. 205:—

Heaven open'd wide
Her ever-during gates.—DUNSTER.

[r] *The time*
Now full.

Alluding to the Scripture phrase, "the fulness of time," Gal. iv. 4.—NEWTON.

[s] *For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.*

This whole soliloquy is formed upon an opinion, which hath authorities enough to give it credit, that Christ was not, by virtue of the personal union of the two natures, and from the first moment of that union, possessed of all the knowledge of the Logos, as far as the capacity of a human mind would admit. [See Le Blanc's "Elucidatio Status Controversiarum," &c. cap. 3.] In his early years he "increased in wisdom, and in stature." St. Luke, ii. 52. And Beza observes upon this place, that—"Ipsa Θεότητος plenitudo sese, prout et quatenus ipsa libuit, humanitati assumtæ insinuavit: quicquid garriant matæologi, et novi ubiquitarii Eutychiani." Grotius employs the same principle to explain St. Mark, xiii. 32:—"Videtur mihi, ni meliora docear, hic locus non impie posse exponi hunc in modum; ut dicamus divinam sapientiam

So spake our Morning Star[t], then in his rise;
And, looking round, on every side beheld
A pathless desert[u], dusk with horrid shades[v]:
The way he came not having mark'd, return
Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodged in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society[w].
Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
Sometimes[x], anon on shady vale, each night
Under the covert of some ancient oak
Or cedar[y] to defend him from the dew[z],

menti humanæ Christi effectus suos impressisse pro temporum ratione: nam quid aliud est, si verba non torquemus, προέκοπτε σοφίᾳ, Luc. ii. 52?" And our Tillotson approved the opinion:—"It is not unreasonable to suppose, that the Divine Wisdom, which dwelt in our Saviour, did communicate itself to his human soul according to his pleasure, and so his human nature might at some times not know some things: and if this be not admitted, how can we understand that passage concerning our Saviour, Luke ii. 52, that 'Jesus grew in wisdom and stature?'"—CALTON.

[t] *So spake our Morning Star.*

So our Saviour is called, in the Revelation, xxii. 16, "the bright and morning star."—NEWTON.

And thus Spenser, in his "Hymn of Heavenly Love:"—

O blessed well of love! O flowre of grace!
O glorious Morning-star! &c.

Compare also Luke i. 78, 2 Pet. i. 19.—DUNSTER.

[u] *A pathless desert.*

Æschyl. "Prom. Vinct." ver. 2. And see Beaumont and Fletcher's "Nice Valour:"—

Fountain heads, and pathless groves;
Places which pale Passion loves.—DUNSTER.

[v] *Dusk with horrid shades.*

Thus Virgil describes the wood in which Euryalus is taken, in his ninth Æneid, 381:—

Sylva fuit, late dumis atque ilice nigra
Horrida, quam densi complerant undique sentes:
Rara per occultos lucebat semita calles.

But "dusk with horrid shades" is more immediately from Æn. i. 165:—

Horrentique atrum nemus imminet umbra.—DUNSTER.

Probably not without a reference also to Tasso. See my note on 'Comus,' ver. 428.—TODD.

[w] *And he still on was led, but with such thoughts*
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodged in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.

The poet here resumes and continues the description he had given of our blessed Lord, previous to his soliloquy, on his first entering the desert, v. 189.—DUNSTER.

[x] *Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill*
Sometimes, &c.

Here the poet of 'Paradise Lost' breaks out in his meridian splendour. There is something particularly picturesque in this description.—DUNSTER.

[y] *Or cedar.*

There is great propriety in mentioning this tree, as being peculiar to the country where the scene is laid.—JOS. WARTON.

[z] *To defend him from the dew.*

That the dews of that country are very considerable, may be collected from several parts of Scripture. The dews of Mount Hermon are particularly noticed in the 133rd

Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd;
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt,
Till those days ended; hunger'd then at last
Among wild beasts: they at his sight grew mild[a],
Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd; his walk
The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof[b].
But now an aged man[c] in rural weeds,
Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray ewe,
Or wither'd sticks to gather, which might serve

Psalm, as producing the most irriguous effects. Maundrell, in his "Travels," when within little more than half a day's journey of this mountain, says, "we were sufficiently instructed by experience what the Holy Psalmist means by the 'dew of Hermon;' our tents being as wet with it, as if it had rained all night."—DUNSTER.

[a] *Among wild beasts: they at his sight grew mild.*

St. Mark's short account of the temptation is, that our blessed Lord "was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered unto him," ch. i. 13. Archbishop Secker, in his "Sermon on the Temptation," says, "During these forty days, it is observed by St. Mark, that our blessed Redeemer was with the wild beasts; which words must imply, else they are of no significance, that the fiercest animals were awed by his presence, and so far laid aside their savage nature for a time; thus verifying literally, what Eliphaz in Job saith figuratively, concerning a good man; 'At destruction and famine shalt thou laugh, neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth: for they shall be at peace with thee.'" Before the Fall, Milton supposes those beasts, which are now wild, to have been harmless, void of ferocity to each other, and even affectionate towards man. See 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 340, &c. Immediately after the Fall, among other changes of nature, the animals begin to grow savage. See 'Paradise Lost,' b. x. 707. Here, upon the appearance of perfect innocence in a human form amongst them, they begin to resume a certain proportion of the paradisiacal disposition. In Homer's "Hymn to Venus," where that goddess descends on Mount Ida, to visit Anchises at his folds, her appearance is described as having the same effect, in its fullest extent, ver. 68, &c. Giles Fletcher, in his "Christ's Triumph on Earth," 1610, has given a similar but more diffuse description of the effect of our Lord's presence on the wild beasts in the wilderness.—DUNSTER.

[b] *The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof.*

So in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 401:—

About them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
Then as a tiger——

Again, b. x. 712, it is said that, after the Fall, the wild beasts, ceasing to graze,

Devour'd each other, nor stood much in awe
Of Man: but fled him, or with countenance grim
Glared on him passing:—

The latter part of this description is palpably taken from Shakspeare, "Jul. Cæs." a. i. s. 4:—

I met a lion
Who glared upon me, and went surly by,
Without annoying me.—DUNSTER.

[c] *But now an aged man.*

As the Scripture is entirely silent about what personage the tempter assumed, the poet was at liberty to indulge his own fancy; and nothing, I think, could be better conceived for his present purpose, or more likely to prevent suspicion of fraud. The poet might perhaps take the hint from a design of David Vinkboon, where the devil is represented addressing himself to our Saviour, under the appearance of an old man. It is to be met with among Vischer's cuts to the Bible, and is engraved by Landerselt.—THYER.

Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen[d],
To warm him wet return'd from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perused him, then with words thus utter'd spake:
Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan[e]? for single none
Durst ever, who return'd[f], and dropt not here
His carcass, pined with hunger[g] and with drouth.
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the man, whom late
Our new baptizing prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd thee Son
Of God: I saw and heard, for we sometimes
Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth
To town or village nigh[h] (nighest is far),
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear
What happens new; fame also finds us out.

[d] *When winds blow keen.*

This is a descent to human imagery, but in that regard it is beautifully poetical.

[e] *In troop or caravan?*

A caravan, as Tavernier says, is a great convoy of merchants, who meet at certain times and places, to put themselves into a condition of defence from thieves who ride in troops in several desert places upon the road. Hence the safest way of travelling in Turkey and Persia is with the caravan. See "Travels into Persia," in Harris, vol. ii. ch. 2.—NEWTON.

[f] *For single none*
Durst ever, who return'd.

Milton seems here to have had in his mind the vast sandy deserts of Africa; which Diodorus Siculus describes as a "desert full of wild beasts, of vast extent; and from its being devoid of water, and bare of all kinds of food, not only difficult, but absolutely dangerous to pass over." In Jeremiah, the desert is described, "a land that no man passed through." Compare the opening of Dante's "Inferno," where, having passed through the more dreadful part of the *piaggia deserta*, the poet turns himself to regard the dangerous region:—

Così l' animo mio, ch' ancor fuggiva,
Si volse 'ndietro a rimirar lo passo,
Che non lasciò giammai persona viva.—DUNSTER.

[g] *Pined with hunger.*

Death, in the tenth book of the 'Paradise Lost,' thus describes himself:—

Me, who with eternal famine pine.—DUNSTER.

[h] *I saw and heard, for we sometimes*
Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth
To town or village nigh.

All this is finely in character with the assumed person of the tempter, and tends at the same time to give more effect to the preceding descriptions. It should be considered also that it was not necessary to confine those descriptions merely to that part of the wilderness of Judea, into which our Lord was just now entering, v. 193, or where at most he had not advanced any great way, v. 299.—That wilderness was of a great length, the most habitable part being northward towards the river Jordan; southward it extended into vast and uninhabited deserts, which, in the map in Reland's "Palæstina," are termed "vastissimæ solitudines." To describe these, in such a manner as might impress a deep sense of danger in the mind of him to whom he addressed himself, was perfectly consistent with the tempter's purpose.—DUNSTER.

To whom the Son of God:—Who brought me hither,
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek.
By miracle he may, replied the swain;
What other way I see not; for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs[i], to thirst inured
More than the camel[j], and to drink go far,
Men to much misery and hardship born:
But, if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.
He ended, and the Son of God replied:
Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st[k]),
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God; who fed
Our fathers here with manna[l]; in the mount
Moses was forty days, nor eat, nor drank;
And forty days Elijah, without food,
Wander'd this barren waste; the same I now:
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am[m], as I know who thou art?

[i] *Stubs.*

Stubs, not shrubs, is undoubtedly the right word, as connected with roots. Thus Milton's own edition of 1671.

[j] *To thirst inured*
More than the camel.

It is commonly said that camels will go without water three or four days;—"Sitim et quatriduo tolerant," Plin. "Nat. Hist." lib. viii. sect. 26. But Tavernier says, that they will ordinarily live without drink eight or nine days.—NEWTON.

[k] *For I discern thee other than thou seem'st.*

In the concluding book of this poem, our Lord says to the tempter,

Desist; thou art discern'd,
And toil'st in vain.—DUNSTER.

[l] *Man lives not by bread only, but each word*
Proceeding from the mouth of God; who fed
Our fathers here with manna.

The words of St. Matthew, iv. 4, which refer to the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, ver. 3, where the humiliation of the Israelites in the wilderness, and their being there miraculously fed with manna, are recited as arguments for their obedience: "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." The poet, who was, beyond a doubt, "mighty in the Scripture," has with much art availed himself of the original passage in the Old Testament, as it affords him such an immediate and apposite transition to the miraculous feeding the children of Israel, their great lawgiver, and afterwards Elijah, in the wilderness.—DUNSTER.

[m] *Knowing who I am.*

This is not to be understood of Christ's divine nature. The tempter knew him to be the person "declared the Son of God" by a voice from heaven, v. 385, and that was all that he knew of him.—CALTON.

Whom thus answer'd the arch-fiend, now undisguised:—
'Tis true, I am that spirit unfortunate [n],
Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
Kept not my happy station, but was driven
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep;
Yet to that hideous place not so confined
By rigour unconniving, but that oft,
Leaving my dolorous prison [o], I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of earth [p],
Or range in the air [q]; nor from the heaven of heavens
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the Sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job [r],
To prove him and illustrate his high worth;
And, when to all his angels he proposed
To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud [s],

[n] *'Tis true, I am that spirit unfortunate.*

Satan's instantaneous avowal of himself here has a great and fine effect: it is consistent with a certain dignity of character which is given him in general, through the whole of the 'Paradise Lost.' The rest of his speech is artfully submissive.—DUNSTER.

[o] *My dolorous prison.*

'Par. Lost,' b. ii. 618:—

Through many a dark and dreary vale
They pass'd, and many a region dolorous;
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp.—DUNSTER.

Again, in his 'Hymn on the Nativity,' st. xiv.:—

And hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

Although the adjective "dolorous" be common in our old poetry, Milton, I am inclined to think, did not forget Dante's usage of it in the "Inferno," where Satan is called, c. xxxiv.,

Lo 'mperador del doloroso regno.—TODD.

[p] *To round this globe of earth.*

Milton uses the same phrase in his 'Paradise Lost,' b. x. 684, speaking of the sun:—

Had rounded still the horizon.—THYER.

In Quarles's "Job Militant," the devil thus concludes his reply to God's question, Whence comest thou?—

The earth is my dominion, hell's my home;
I round the world, and so from thence I come.—DUNSTER.

[q] *Range in the air.*

The whole of this passage is very poetical and grand.

[r] *Uzzean Job.*

See the first chapter of Job.

[s] *To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud.*

This story of Ahab is related, 1 Kings, xxii. 19, &c.:—"I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by him, on his right hand, and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so." This symbolical vision of Micaiah, in which heavenly things are spoken of after the manner of men, in condescension to the weak-

That he might fall in Ramoth; they demurring,
I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets glibb'd with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge.
For what he bids I do: though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness[t], lost
To be beloved of God; I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire,
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous[u]; I should so have lost all sense:
What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declared the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind: why should I? they to me
Never did wrong or violence; by them
I lost not what I lost, rather by them
I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell,
Copartner in these regions of the world,

ness of their capacities, our author was too good a critic to understand literally, though as a poet he represents it so.—NEWTON.

The expression here is copied from the 'Paradise Lost,' vii. 143:—

> He . . . . into fraud
> Drew many, whom their place knows here no more.—TODD.

[t] *Though I have lost*
Much lustre of my native brightness.

It is said of Satan, in the first book of the 'Paradise Lost,' ver. 591:—

> His form had yet not lost
> All her original brightness:

and when Ithuriel and Zephon, in the end of the fourth book, find him in Paradise, and charge him with being one of the rebel spirits adjudged to hell, Satan asks, if they do not know him: to which Zephon replies:—

> Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same,
> Or undiminish'd brightness to be known,
> As when thou stood'st in heaven upright and pure:
> That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
> Departed from thee;——

and in 'Paradise Lost,' b. i. 97, Satan describes himself "changed in outward lustre."—DUNSTER.

[u] *I have not lost*
To love, at least contemplate and admire,
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous.

In the second book of the 'Paradise Lost,' where the fallen angels are described doing homage to the public spirit of their chief, it is said,—

> for neither do the spirits damn'd
> Lose all their virtue:

and where Satan first sees Adam and Eve in Paradise he contemplates them with admiration. The turn of the words here very much resembles the following passage in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Fair Maid of the Inn," a. v. s. 1:—

> Though I have lost my fortune, and lost you
> For a worthy father; yet I will not lose
> My former virtue; my integrity
> Shall not forsake me.—DUNSTER.

If not disposer; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life[v].
Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe.
At first it may be; but, long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof,
That fellowship in pain divides not smart[w],
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load.
Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd:
This wounds me most (what can it less?); that man,
Man fallen shall be restored, I never more[x].
　To whom our Saviour sternly thus replied:—
Deservedly thou grievest, composed of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
Who boast'st release from hell, and leave to come
Into the heaven of heavens: thou comest indeed,
As a poor miserable captive thrall
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendour, now deposed,
Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunn'd,
A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,
To all the host of heaven: the happy place
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy;
Rather inflames thy torment; representing

[v] *Lend them oft my aid,*
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.

The following passage of Cicero reflects so much light on these lines, as would incline one to think that Milton had it in his mind:—"Multa cernunt haruspices; multa augures provident; multa oraculis declarantur, multa vaticinationibus, multa somniis, multa portentis: quibus cognitis, multæ sæpe res hominum sententia atque utilitate partæ" (or, as Lambinus reads, *ex animi sententia atque utilitate partæ*), "multa etiam pericula depulsa sunt."—"De Nat. Deor." ii. 65.—NEWTON.

[w] *Now I feel, by proof,*
That fellowship in pain divides not smart.

Our author had in his eye this line of the poet:—

Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.—THYER.

Or these of Ovid, Met. xv. 547:—

Non tamen Egeriæ luctus aliena levare
Damna valent.—DUNSTER.

[x] *This wounds me most (what can it less?); that man,*
Man fallen shall be restored, I never more.

Very artful: as he could not acquit himself of envy and mischief, he endeavours to soften his crimes, by assigning this cause of them.—WARBURTON.

The poet very judiciously makes the tempter conclude with these lines concerning the restoration of fallen man, in order to lead our Saviour to say something about the manner of it, to know which was one great part of his design; that he might be able, if possible, to counterplot and prevent it. With no less judgment is our Saviour represented, in the following answer, taking no other notice of it than by replying, "Deservedly thou grievest," &c.—THYER.

Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable[y],
So never more in hell than when in heaven.
But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King.
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites[z]?
What but thy malice moved thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions? but his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths[a];
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all oracles
By thee are given, and what confess'd more true
Among the nations? that hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies[b].
But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding[c],

[y] *The happy place*
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy:
Rather inflames thy torment; representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable.

We find the same sentiment also in 'Paradise Lost,' b. ix. 467.—

But the hot hell that always in him burns,
Though in mid heaven, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure, not for him ordain'd—THYER.

This passage is at once sublime and pathetic.

[z] *Or pleasure to do ill excites.*

Satan, in 'Paradise Lost,' b. i. 159, in his first conference with his infernal compeer, says,

To do aught good never will be our task;
But ever to do ill our sole delight.—DUNSTER.

[a] *In four hundred mouths.*

"Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men," 1 Kings, ch. xxii. ver. vi.—DUNSTER.

[b] *That hath been thy craft,*
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.

The following passage from St. Austin may serve to illustrate what Milton here says:—"Miscent tamen isti [dæmones] fallacias; et verum quod nosse potuerint, non docendi magis quam decipiendi fine, prænuntiant."—De Div. Dæmon. sect. 12.—THYER.

[c] *But what have been thy answers, what but dark,*
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding.

The oracles were often so obscure and dubious, that there was need of other oracles to explain them:—

"Sed jam ad te venio,
Sancte Apollo, qui umbilicum certum terrarum obsides,
Unde superstitiosa primum sæva evasit vox fera.

Tuis enim oraculis Chrysippus totum volumen implevit, partim falsis, ut ego opinor, partim casu veris, ut fit in omni oratione sæpissime; partim flexiloquis et obscuris, ut interpres egeat interprete, et sors ipsa ad sortes referenda sit; partim ambiguis, et quæ ad dialecticum deferenda sint." Cicero, "De Div." ii. 56.—CALTON.

Milton in these lines about the heathen oracles, seems to have had in view what Eusebius says more copiously upon this subject in the fifth book of his "Preparatio

Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
And not well understood as good not known?
Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct[d],
To fly or follow what concern'd him most,
And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
For God hath justly given the nations up
To thy delusions; justly, since they fell
Idolatrous: but, when his purpose is
Among them to declare his providence
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from him, or his angels president
In every province[e], who themselves disdaining
To approach thy temples, give thee in command
What, to the smallest tittle, thou shalt say
To thy adorers? Thou with trembling fear,
Or like a fawning parasite obey'st:

Evangelica." That learned father reasons in the very same way about them, and gives many instances from history of their delusive and double meanings.—THYER.

Probably Milton had here in mind the exclamation also of Macbeth, when he finds that the weird sisters had shuffled him with ambiguous expressions, Macbeth, a. and s. ult.:—

And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense.

But see also Heywood's "Hierarchie of Angels," fol. 1635, p. 442, where the "doubtfull answers of oracles" are noticed, and rightly described:—

So intricate that none could vnderstand,
Or meerely toyes and lies; for their words were,
By interpointing, so disposed, to beare
A double sense.—TODD.

[d] *Instruct.*

Thus, b. ii. ver. 399, he writes *suspect* for *suspected.* In the 'Paradise Lost' he always writes the participles at length; but in this poem he has in every respect condensed his style, which may be one reason why it does not please the million.—DUNSTER.

[e] *But from him, or his angels president*
In every province.

"Utitur etiam eis Deus (dæmonibus) ad veritatis manifestationem per ipsos fiendam, dum divina mysteria eis per angelos revelantur." The words are quoted from Aquinas (2da 2dæ Quest. 172, Art. 6).—CALTON.

This notion Milton very probably had from Tertullian and St. Austin. Tertullian, speaking of the gods of the heathens and their oracles, says,—"Dispositiones etiam Dei et tunc prophetis concionantibus exceperunt, et nunc lectionibus resonantibus carpunt: ita et hinc sumentes quasdam temporum sortes æmulantur divinitatem, dum furantur divinationem: in oraculis autem, quo ingenio ambiguitates temperent in eventus, sciunt Crœsi, sciunt Pyrrhi." Apol. c. 22. St. Austin, more appositely to our present purpose, answering the heathen boasts of their oracles, says,—"tamen nec ista ipsa, quæ ab eis vix raro et clanculo proferuntur, movere nos debent, si cuiquam dæmonum extortum est id prodere cultoribus suis quod didicerat ex eloquiis prophetarum, vel ex oraculis angelorum." Aug. "De Div. Dæmonum," sect. 12, tom. 6, ed. Bened. And again:—"Cum enim vult Deus etiam per infimos infernosque spiritus aliquem vera cognoscere, temporalia dumtaxat atque ad istam mortalitatem pertinentia; facile est, et non incongruum, ut Omnipotens et Justus, ad eorum pœnam, quibus ista prædicuntur, ut malum quod eis impendet ante quam veniat prænoscendo patientur; occulto apparatu ministeriorum suorum etiam spiritibus talibus aliquid divinationis impertiat, ut quod audiunt ab angelis prænuntient hominibus."—De Div. Quæst. ad Simp. l. II. s. iii. tom. 6.—THYER.

Then to thyself ascribest the truth foretold [f].
But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd;
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceased [g],
And thou no more with pomp or sacrifice
Shalt be inquired at Delphos, or elsewhere;
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
God hath now sent his living oracle [h]
Into the world to teach his final will;
And sends his Spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know.
So spake our Saviour; but the subtle fiend,
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembled, and this answer smooth return'd:—
Sharply thou hast insisted [i] on rebuke,
And urged me hard with doings, which not will,
But misery hath wrested from me. Where

[f] *Then to thyself ascribest the truth foretold.*

The demons, Lactantius says, could certainly foresee, and truly foretel, many future events, from the knowledge they had of the dispositions of Providence before their fall; and then they assumed all the honour to themselves; pretending to be the authors and doers of what they predicted. "Nam cum dispositiones Dei præsentiant, quippe qui ministri ejus fuerunt, interponunt se in his rebus; ut quæcunque a Deo vel facta sunt vel fiunt, ipsi potissimum facere aut fecisse videantur."—Div. Inst. ii 16.—CALTON.

[g] *Henceforth oracles are ceased, &c.*

As Milton had before adopted the ancient opinion of oracles being the operations of the fallen angels; so here again he follows the same authority, in making them cease at the coming of our Saviour. See the matter fully discussed in Fontenelle's "History of Oracles," and Father Baltus's answer to him.—THYER.

Thus Juvenal, Sat. vi. 554:—

Delphis oracula cessant.

And in the fifth book of Lucan's "Pharsalia," where Appius is desirous to consult the Delphic oracle, but finds it dumb, the priestess tells him:—

Muto Parnassus hiatu
Conticuit, pressitque Deum; seu spiritus istas
Destituit fauces, mundique in devia versum
Duxit iter:—
seu sponte Deorum
Cyrrha silet.

Thus also Milton, in his 'Hymn on the Nativity:'—

The oracles are dumb, &c.

And before him, Giles Fletcher, in his "Christ's Victory in Heaven," st. 82:—

The angels caroll'd loud their song of peace;
The cursed oracles were strucken dumb.—DUNSTER.

[h] *His living oracle.*

Christ is styled by the Greek fathers, "essential life," the "living counsel," and "the living word of God:" and St. John says, that "in him was life, and the life was the light of men," i. 4.—CALTON.

And in Acts vii. 38, where it is said,—"Who received the lively (or living) oracles to give unto us."—DUNSTER.

[i] *Sharply thou hast insisted, &c.*

The smoothness and hypocrisy of this speech of Satan are artful in the extreme, and cannot be passed over unobserved.—JOS. WARTON.

Easily canst thou find one miserable,
And not enforced oft-times to part from truth,
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure[j]?
But thou art placed above me, thou art Lord;
From thee I can, and must, submiss, endure
Check or reproof, and glad to 'scape so quit.
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk[k],
Smooth on the tongue discoursed, pleasing to the ear,
And tunable as sylvan pipe or song[l]:
What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? Most men admire
Virtue, who follow not her lore[m]: permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes),
And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous[n] priest
To tread his sacred courts, and minister
About his altar, handling holy things,

[j] *Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?*

Might not Milton possibly intend here, and particularly by the word "abjure," to lash some of his complying friends, who renounced their republican principles at the Restoration?—THYER.

[k] *Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk.*

Thus Silius Italicus, b. xv., where Virtue is the speaker:—

Casta mihi domus, et celso stant colle penates;
Ardua saxoso perducit semita clivo;
Asper principio (nec enim mihi fallere mos est)
Prosequitur labor. Adnitendum intrare volenti.—DUNSTER.

We must not here overpass Milton's 'Preface to his Reason of Church Government,' &c., b. ii.:—"Those . . . . who will not so much as look upon Truth herself, unless they see her elegantly dressed; that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant; they will then appear to all men both easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed." Compare also 'Comus,' ver. 476, et seq.—TODD.

[l] *Tunable as sylvan pipe or song*

So, in 'Paradise Lost,' v. 149:—

Such prompt eloquence
Flow'd from their lips in prose or numerous verse,
More tunable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness.

And Shakspeare, "Midsummer Night's Dream," a. i. s. 14:—

More tunable than lark to shepherd's ear.—DUNSTER.

[m] *Most men admire
Virtue, who follow not her lore.*

Imitated from the well-known saying of Medea, Ovid, Met. viii. 20:

Video meliora proboque;
Deteriora sequor.—NEWTON.

[n] *Atheous.*

Cicero, speaking of Diagoras, says, "Atheos qui dictus est," De Nat. Deor. i. 23.—DUNSTER.

"Atheous" may have hence been coined by the poet. "Atheal," which has the same signification, is not uncommon in old English.—TODD.

Praying or vowing°; and vouchsafed his voice
To Balaam reprobate[p], a prophet yet
Inspired: disdain not such access to me.
To whom our Saviour, with unalter'd brow:
Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not, or forbid; do as thou find'st
Permission from above; thou canst not more[q].
He added not; and Satan, bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappear'd,
Into thin air diffused[r]: for now began
Night with her sullen wings[s] to double-shade[t]

[o] *Praying or vowing.*

Besides sacrifices of prayer and thanksgiving, the Jews had vow-sacrifices (Lev. vii. 16), oblations for vows (xxii. 18), and sacrifices in peforming their vows (Numb. xv. 3, 8).—DUNSTER.

[p] *And vouchsafed his voice*
To Balaam reprobate.

An argument more plausible and more fallacious could not have been put into the mouth of the tempter. Perfectly to enter into all the circumstances of this remarkable piece of Scripture history, and clearly to apprehend this judicious application of it by the poet in this place, we may refer to Bishop Butler's excellent "Sermon on the Character of Balaam," or to Shuckford's account of it in the twelfth book of his "Connexion of Sacred and Profane History."—DUNSTER.

[q] *Thou canst not more.*

So Gabriel replies to Satan, 'Paradise Lost,' book iv. 1006:—

Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine;
Neither our own, but given: what folly then
To boast what arms can do? since thine no more
Than Heaven permits.—TODD.

[r] *Into thin air diffused.*

So Virgil, Æn. iv. 278:—

Et procul in tenuem ex oculis evanuit auram.—NEWTON.

And Shakspeare, "Tempest," a. iv. s. 2:—

These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air.—DUNSTER.

[s] *Her sullen wing.*

Virgil, Æn. viii. 369:—

Nox ruit, et fuscis tellurem amplectitur alis.

And Tasso describes Night covering the sky "with her wings," Gier. Lib. c. vii. st 57:—

Sorgea la Notte in tanto, e sotto l' ali
Recopriva del cielo i campi immensi.

Compare Spenser also, 'Faery Queen,' vi. viii. 54:—

And now the even-tide
His broad black wings had through the heavens wide
By this dispread.

And see 'Allegro.' ver. 6.—DUNSTER.

[t] *To double-shade.*

i. e. to double the natural shade and darkness of the place. This is more fully expressed in Hogæus's translation of this passage:—

Nam nunc obscuras Nox atra expandere pennas
Cœperat, atque nigras nemorum geminare tenebras.

Thus in 'Comus,' ver. 335:—

In double night of darkness and of shades.

The desert; fowls in their clay nests were couch'd;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam[u].

In a note on which last verse, in Mr. Warton's edition of the 'Juvenile Poems,' the following line of Pacuvius, cited by Cicero ("De Divinat." i. 14), is exhibited:—

Tenebræ conduplicantur, noctisque et nimborum occæcat nigror.

We may also compare Ovid, Met. xi. 548:—

Tanta vertigine pontus
Fervet, et inducta piceis a nubibus umbra
Omne latet cœlum, duplicataque noctis imago est.

And see ibid. 521.—DUNSTER.

[u] *And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.*

This brief description of night coming on in the desert is singularly fine: it is a small but exquisite sketch, which so immediately shows the hand of the master, that his larger and more finished pieces can hardly be rated higher. The commencement of this description, both in respect of its beginning with an hemistich, and also in the sort of instantaneous coming on of night which it represents, resembles much a passage in Tasso, "Gier. Lib." c. iii. st. 71:—

Cosi diss' egli;—e gia la Notte oscura
Havea tutti del giorno i raggi spenti.—DUNSTER.

The description of the probable manner of our Lord's passing the forty days in the wilderness is very picturesque; and the return of the wild beasts to their paradisiacal mildness is finely touched. The appearance of the tempter in his assumed character: the deep art of his first two speeches, covered, but not totally concealed, by a semblance of simplicity: his bold avowal and plausible vindication of himself: the subsequent detection of his fallacies, and the pointed reproofs of his impudence and hypocrisy on the part of our blessed Lord, cannot be too much admired. Indeed, the whole conclusion of this book abounds so much in closeness of reasoning, grandeur of sentiment, elevation of style, and harmony of numbers, that it may well be questioned, whether poetry on such a subject, and especially in the form of a dialogue, ever produced anything superior to it.

The singular beauty of the brief description of night coming on in the desert, closes the book with such admirable effect, that it leaves us *con la bocca dolce.*—DUNSTER.

BOOK II.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

It is sometimes useful to warn the reader what he is to expect in each portion of a long poem, as it is offered to him. The second book of the 'Paradise Regained' begins soberly,—perhaps in a tone almost prosaic. To begin low, and rise by a gradual climax, is admitted to be one of the great arts of beautiful composition.

The anxiety and alarm felt by the disciples of Jesus, at missing him so soon, while detained in the wilderness, coming suddenly on their joy at the discovery of his advent; and the pathetic yet patient reflections of Mary at the loss of her son, though related with extreme plainness, are full of deep interest, and the most affecting natural touches: they abound in passages which excite human sympathy.

Satan, hitherto defeated in his temptations of our Saviour, now resorts again to his council of peers: at which occurs that magnificent dialogue between the sensual Belial and him, which is at any rate as rich and poetical as the finest in 'Paradise Lost;' and shows a vein of warmth, and imagery, and invention, and language, that is evidence how strongly the poet's genius was yet in its full bloom and verdure. Satan's answer to Belial is the more powerful, as coming from the prince of darkness himself: how then does the lustful fiend stand rebuked!

Now Jesus had fasted forty days, and began to suffer by hunger: Satan seizes the occasion, and resolves to take advantage of it. Our Saviour, weary and exhausted, slept under the cover of trees, and dreamed of food supplied by an angel, who invited him to eat. He waked with the morning, and found that all was but a dream:—

Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked.

He walked to the top of a hill, to see if there was any human habitation within reach; and there a rich but solitary landscape displayed itself before him, raised magically by Satan and his imps, for the purposes of the delusion which was to follow.

While gazing upon this magnificent prospect, Satan again accosts him, and endeavours to alarm his faith at being left thus destitute:—

As his words had end,
Our Saviour, lifting up his eyes, beheld,
In ample space, under the broadest shade,
A dinner spread, &c.

Here is an invented array, than which nothing in 'Paradise Lost' can be richer either in imagery or poetical language.

Our Saviour rejects with scorn the temptation: he says:

I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of angels ministrant,
Array'd in glory, on my cup to attend:
Why shouldst thou then obtrude this diligence
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts, no gifts, but guiles.

Satan grows angry at the refusal, and

With that
Both table and provision vanish'd quite,
With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard.

The tempter was not yet to be foiled: he now makes an offer of riches, and

descants upon their advantages for the purposes of that dominion which he assumes that our Saviour was sent to obtain.

Jesus answers, that wealth without virtue, valour, and wisdom is impotent; and that the highest deeds have been performed in the lowest poverty: he then expounds what are the duties and what are the cares of a king; and how much more desirable it is to surrender a sceptre, than to gain one.

Were there in this book nothing but the spiritual and intellectual part, the thoughts and the sentiments, I, for one, should not think the less of it; but it is not so: there are duly intermixed that material, those picturesque descriptions, those striking incidents of fact, which the common critics and the generality of readers more especially deem to be poetry.

The whole story (and it is a beautiful story) is in part practical, though operated on by immaterial beings, whose delusive powers over our earthly conduct and fate are consistent with our belief. The temptations are such as a mere human being could not have resisted; and to have resisted them is a true test of Christ's divinity.

But the arguments by which they were resisted, contain the most profound doctrines of religion and morals, such as for ever apply to human life, extend and purify the understanding, and elevate the heart. We should have been glad to have learned the grand results at which the mighty mind of Milton had arrived, even if they had been expressed in prose; but how much more when arranged in all the glowing eloquence of poetry! when interwoven in a sublime story, and deriving practical application from their embodiments and their progressive influences!

The reply to the allurements of female beauty, and still more to the impotent splendour of wealth, unaccompanied by virtue and talent, is an outburst of imaginative strength and sublimity: it is wisdom irradiated by glory. Whoever does not find himself better and happier by reading and reflecting upon those grand and sentimental arguments, has neither head nor heart, but is a stagnant congeries of clayey coldness and inanimate insusceptibility.

We may be forgiven for dispensing with all poetry, of which the mere result is innocent pleasure, that is, they may lay it aside to whom it is no pleasure. But this is not the case with Milton's poetry: his is the voice of instruction and wisdom, to which he who refuses to listen, is guilty of a crime. If we are so dull, that we cannot understand him without labour and pain, still we are bound to undergo that labour and pain. They who are not ashamed of their own ignorance and inapprehensiveness are lost.

For the purpose of fixing attention, I suspect that Milton's latinized style is best calculated. He who has more acquired knowledge than native and quick taste, ought to study him as he studies Virgil and Homer: in him he will find all that is profound and eloquent in the ancient classics, amalgamated, and exalted at the same time by the aid of the sacred writings; all working together in the plastic mind of the most powerful and sublime of human poets.

Strength, not grace, was Milton's characteristic: his grasp was that of an unsparing giant; he showed the sinews and muscles of his naked form; he put on no soft garments of a dove-like tenderness: he neither adorned himself with jewels nor gold leaf; all was plain as nature made him.

Thus his descriptions of scenery, of the seasons, of morning and evening, were rich, but not embellished or sophisticated. In this book, the break of the dawn, the gathering of the night shades, the dark covering of the umbrageous forests, the open and sunny glades, are all painted in the sober hues of visible reality.

There is nothing enfeebling in any of Milton's visionariness. His bold and vigorous mind braces us for action; his strains beget a patient loftiness, prepared for temptations, difficulties, and dangers.

It is in vain for authors to attempt to effectuate this tone by practising the artifices of composition: it is produced solely by the poet's belief in what he writes; by his being under the impulse of the ideal presence of what he represents. He does not conjure up factitious images, factitious feelings, and factitious language. Where the soul is wanting, the dress or form will be of no avail.

Milton's purpose was to represent the embodiment and refraction of what he believed to be truth. What was visible to himself, but not palpable to common eyes, except by the Muse's aid, he wanted to make palpable and distinct to others. The immaterial world is covered with a mist, or a veil, to all but the gifted; unless they become a mirror for duller sights.

ARGUMENT.

THE disciples of Jesus, uneasy at his long absence, reason amongst themselves concerning it. Mary also gives vent to her maternal anxiety; in the expression of which she recapitulates many circumstances respecting the birth and early life of her Son.—Satan again meets his infernal council, reports the bad success of his first temptation of our blessed Lord, calls upon them for counsel and assistance. Belial proposes the tempting of Jesus with women. Satan rebukes Belial for his dissoluteness, charging on him all the profligacy of that kind ascribed by the poets to the heathen gods, and rejects his proposal as in no respect likely to succeed. Satan then suggests other modes of temptation, particularly proposing to avail himself of our Lord's hungering; and, taking a band of chosen spirits with him, returns to resume his enterprise.—Jesus hungers in the desert.—Night comes on; the manner in which our Saviour passes the night is described.—Morning advances.—Satan again appears to Jesus; and, after expressing wonder that he should be so entirely neglected in the wilderness, where others had been miraculously fed, tempts him with a sumptuous banquet of the most luxurious kind. This he rejects, and the banquet vanishes.—Satan, finding our Lord not to be assailed on the ground of appetite, tempts him again by offering him riches, as the means of acquiring power: this Jesus also rejects, producing many instances of great actions performed by persons under virtuous poverty, and specifying the danger of riches, and the cares and pains inseparable from power and greatness.

MEANWHILE the new-baptized[a], who yet remain'd
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they had so late expressly call'd
Jesus, Messiah, Son of God declared[b],
And on that high authority had believed,
And with him talk'd, and with him lodged[c]; I mean

[a] *Meanwhile the new-baptized, &c.*

The greatest, and indeed justest objection to this poem is the narrowness of its plan, which, being confined to that single scene of our Saviour's life on earth, his temptation in the desert, has too much sameness in it; too much of the reasoning, and too little of the descriptive part; a defect most certainly in an epic poem, which ought to consist of a proper and happy mixture of the instructive and the delightful. Milton was himself, no doubt, sensible of this imperfection, and has therefore very judiciously contrived and introduced all the little digressions that could with any sort of propriety connect with his subject, in order to relieve and refresh the reader's attention. The following conversation betwixt Andrew and Simon upon the missing of our Saviour so long, with the Virgin's reflections on the same occasion, and the council of the devils how best to attack their enemy, are instances of this sort, and both very happily executed in their respective ways. The language of the former is cool and unaffected, corresponding most exactly to the humble pious character of the speakers: that of the latter is full of energy and majesty, and not inferior to their most spirited speeches in the 'Paradise Lost.'—THYER.

[b] *Jesus, Messiah, Son of God declared.*

This is a great mistake in the poet. All that the people could collect from the declarations of John the Baptist, and the voice from heaven, was that he was a great prophet, and this was all they did in fact collect: they were uncertain whether he was their promised Messiah.—WARBURTON.

But surely the declaration, by the voice from heaven, of Jesus being the beloved Son of God, was, as Milton terms it, "high authority" for believing that he was the Messiah.—John the Baptist had also, John i. 29, expressly called him "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world," referring, as is generally supposed, to Isaiah liii. 7. And, the day following, John's giving him the same title, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John i. 36) is the ground of Andrew's conversion, who thereupon followed Jesus; and having passed some time with him, declared to his brother Peter, "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ," John i. 41.—DUNSTER.

[c] *And with him talk'd, and with him lodged.*

These particulars are founded, as Dr. Newton observes, on what is related in the first chapter of St. John, respecting two of John's disciples (one of whom was Andrew,

Andrew and Simon[d], famous after known,
With others though in Holy Writ not named;
Now missing him, their joy so lately found
(So lately found, and so abruptly gone)
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And, as the days increased, increased their doubt.
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown[e],
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the mount and missing long;
And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to heaven[f], yet once again to come[g].

and the other probably John the Evangelist himself), following Jesus to the place where he dwelt, and abiding with him that day.—DUNSTER.

[d] *I mean*
Andrew and Simon.

This sounds very prosaic; but I find a like instance or two in Harrington's translation of the "Orlando Furioso," c. xxxi. st. 46:—

And calling still upon that noble name,
That often had the pagans overcome,
I mean Renaldo's house of Montalbane.

And again, st. 55:—

How she had seen the bridge of the pagan made,
I mean the cruel pagan Rodomont.—NEWTON.

[e] *Sometimes they thought he might be only shown.*

Virg. Æn. vi. 870:—

Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, nec ultra
Esse sinent.—NEWTON.

[f] *And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels*
Rode up to heaven.

Elijah, snatched up into heaven in a fiery chariot, was a favourite image in Milton's early years, and perfectly coincided with his cast of genius. Thus, in his 'Ode on the Passion,' st. 6:—

See, see the chariot, and those rushing wheels,
That whirl'd the prophet up at Chebar flood.

And 'In Obit. Præsul. Eliens.' ver. 49:—

Vates ut olim raptus ad cœlum senex,
Auriga currus ignei.

And I think we may trace it more than once in the 'Prose Works,' either by comparison or allusion. The "fiery-wheeled throne," in 'Il Penseroso,' has another origin.—T. WARTON.

Mr. Dunster adds, from the poet's 'In Proditionem Bombardicam,' ver. 5:—

Scilicet hos alti missurus ad atria cœli,
Sulphureo curru, flammivolisque rotis:
Qualiter ille, feris caput inviolabile Parcis,
Liquit Iordanios turbine raptus agros.

Milton seems, in his descriptions of the prophet, to have had in mind Sylvester, "Du Bart." edit. 1621, p. 72:—

Pure spirit, that rapt'st above the firmest sphear,
In fiery coach thy faithful messenger, &c.

See likewise the note 'In Obit. Præs. El.' ver. 48. Or, as Mr. Dunster also remarks, Sylvester might have been a prompter in the following lines, "Du Bart." p. 295:—

O, thou fair chariot flaming brauely bright,
Which like a whirl-winde in thy swift career
Rapt'st vp the Thesbit.

Milton, in like manner, writes "vates terræ Thesbitidis," Eleg. iv. 97. But Castalio likewise defends this orthography; "Elias autem Thesbita," &c. Regum, lib. iii. cap. 17. ed Basil. 1573. Dr. Newton explains "Thisbite" by adding "Or

Therefore, as those young prophets then with care
Sought lost Elijah; so in each place these
Nigh to Bethabara[h], in Jericho
The city of palms[i], Ænon, and Salem old,

Tishbite," as Elijah is called in the English translation of the Bible; and that Elijah was a native of Thisbe or Tishbe, a city of the country of Gilead, beyond Jordan. Elijah is called "the Thesbian prophet," in Sandys's "Christ's Passion," ed. 1640, p. 51.—TODD.

[g] *Yet once again to come.*

It hath been the opinion of the Church, that there would be an Elias before Christ's second coming, as well as before his first; and this opinion the learned Mr. Mede supports from the prophecy of Malachi, iv. 5:—"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," &c. and from what our Saviour says, Matt. xvii. 11:—"Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things." These words our Saviour spake when John Baptist was beheaded, and yet speaks as of a thing future, "and shall restore all things." But as it was not Elias in person, but only in spirit, who appeared before our Saviour's first coming, so will it also be before his second. The reader may see the arguments at large, in Dr. Mede's Discourse xxv. which no doubt Milton had read, not only on account of the fame and excellence of the writer, but as he was also his fellow-collegian.—NEWTON.

Though our Saviour used the future tense, something must be previously understood to limit the sense of it to what was then passed, to a prophecy already accomplished. Bishop Pearce, in his commentary on the passage, has, "was to come first and restore all things:" and Beza, in a note on the place, says, "Hæc autem intelligenda sunt forma dicendi e medio petita, perinde ac si diceret Christus, Verum quidem est quod scribæ dicunt etiam, videlicet ante gressurum fuisse Messiam, et secuturæ instaurationi viam aperturum; sed dico vobis, Eliam jam venisse," &c. It was however the general tradition of the elder writers of the Christian Church, from those words of Malachi, that Elias the Tishbite was to come in person before our Lord's second advent; which opinion the Jesuit De la Cerda, in his Commentary on Tertullian, "De Resurrect. Carn." c. 23, says, all the ancient Fathers have delivered, "tradit tota Patrum antiquitas."—DUNSTER.

[h] *Nigh to Bethabara.*

It has been observed in a preceding note (b. i. ver. 193) that M. D'Anville, in the map of Judea in his "Géographie Ancienne," has laid down Bethabara wrong. Adrichomius, in his "Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ," places Bethabara on the eastern bank of the river Jordan, at a small distance from the Dead Sea, nearly opposite Jericho. Indeed, if we consider it to have been the place where the Israelites passed over Jordan to go into the land of Canaan, on whichever side of the river we place it, it must have been nearly opposite Jericho: as it is expressly said, Joshua iii. 16, "the people passed over right against Jericho." The Eastern travellers also show, that the place, where the tradition of that country supposes Jesus to have been baptized by John in Jordan, was not more than a day's journey distant from Jerusalem; and that Jericho lay directly in the way to it. (See Pocock's "Travels in the East," and Maundrell's "Journal.") Bishop Pearce places Bethabara on the same side of the river with Jericho, that is on the western bank. This opinion he grounds on what is said, Judges, vii. 24, about the inhabitants of Mount Ephraim "taking the waters" (i. e. taking possession of all the springs), from them "unto Bethabara and Jordan." Bethabara indeed (John i. 28) is described "beyond Jordan," πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου: but this Bishop Pearce reconciles, by showing that πέραν often signifies in Scripture, "on the side of," or "on this side of." For this construction of πέραν, he cites many authorities in his note on Matt. iv. 15, and likewise refers to Casaubon's note on John i. 28. But it should be observed that Beza has the same remark, and that he renders πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, not *trans Jordanum*, but *secus Jordanum*, "nigh to Jordan," both in Matt. iv. 15, and John i. 28. St. Jerom, "De Nominibus Hebræis," speaks of Bethabara, as standing partly on the western, and partly on the eastern bank of the river Jordan.—DUNSTER.

[i] *The city of palms, &c.*

Jericho is called "the city of palms," Deut. xxxiv. 3: and Josephus, Strabo, Pliny, and all writers describe it as abounding with those trees. Ænon is mentioned, John

Machærus, and each town or city wall'd
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
Or in Peræa; but return'd in vain.
Then on the bank of Jordan [j], by a creek,
Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play [k],

iii. 23, as is likewise Salim or Salem: but there appears to be no particular reason for our author's calling it "Salem old," unless he takes it to be the same with the Shalem mentioned Gen. xxxiii. 18, or confounds it with the Salem where Melchizedek was king. Machærus was a castle in the mountainous part of Peræa or the country beyond Jordan, which river is well known to run through the lake of Genezareth, or the sea of Tiberias, or the sea of Galilee, as it is otherwise called: so that they searched in each place on this side Jordan, or in Peræa, πέραν Ἰορδάνου, beyond it.—NEWTON.

By the expression, "on this side the broad lake Genezareth," I would understand, not on the opposite side of the river to Peræa, but below the lake of Genezareth, or to the south of it, between that and the Asphaltic Lake, or the Dead Sea; which is exactly the situation of the places here mentioned, none of which could be properly said to have stood on this side, that is, on the western side of the lake of Genezareth, though three of them stood on the western side of the river Jordan. *Or* in Peræa, may be only understood to mean *and* in Peræa, or *even* in Peræa: such is often the conjunctive sense of *vel*, and sometimes of *aut* in Latin, and of ἢ in Greek. It is probable that Milton had the same idea of the situation of Bethabara with that noticed in the preceding note, as admitted by Bishop Pearce, and before suggested by Beza and Casaubon. This he may be supposed to have acquired from Beza, whose translation of the Greek Testament with notes, we may imagine, was in no small degree of repute at the time when our author visited Geneva. Accordingly, the first place where he makes the disciples seek Jesus is Jericho, on the same side of the river as Bethabara, and the nearest place of any consequence to it; then Ænon and Salem, both likewise on the same side, but higher up towards the lake of Genezareth; then he seems to make them cross the river and seek him in all the places in the opposite country of Peræa, down to the town and strong fortress of Machærus, which is mentioned by Josephus, "De Bello Jud." l. vii. c. 6. Milton had good authority for terming Salem, "Salem old." St. Jerom shows that the Salem, Gen. xxxiii. 18, was not Jerusalem, "sed oppidum juxta Scythopolim, quod usque hodie appellatur Salem; ubi ostenditur palatium Melchizedec, ex magnitudine ruinarum veteris operis ostendens magnificentiam." See Hieronym. Epist. cxxvi. ad. Evag.—DUNSTER.

[j] *On the bank of Jordan.*

Mr. Dunster observes, that Maundrell, in his "Journey to Jerusalem," &c.. describes the river Jordan as having its banks in some parts covered so thick with bushes and trees, such as tamarisks, oleanders, and willows, that they prevented the water from being seen till any one had made his way through them. In this thicket, he says, several sorts of wild beasts harbour, which are frequently washed out of their covert by the sudden overflowings of the river. Hence that allusion in Jeremiah, xlix. 19: "Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan." The same critic also notices the reference made to the reedy banks of Jordan, in Giles Fletcher's "Christ's Triumph over Death," st. 2:—

Or whistling reeds that rutty Jordan laves.

Milton, by the distinction which he here makes, had perhaps noticed Sandys's account of Jordan, in his "Travels;" who says, "Passing along, it maketh two lakes; the one in the Vpper Galilee, named Samachontis (now Houle), in the summer for the most part dry, ouergrowne with shrubs and reeds, which afford a shelter for bores and leopards; the other in the Inferior, called the Sea of Galilee, the lake of Genezareth and of Tyberias," &c. p. 141, edit. 1615.—TODD.

[k] *Whispering play.*

The whispering of the wind is an image that Milton is particularly fond of, and has introduced in many beautiful passages of his 'Paradise Lost.' Thus in the opening of the fifth book, where Adam wakens Eve:—

then with voice
Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus.

Plain fishermen (no greater men them call[1]),
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and plaints out breathed.
  Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
Unlook'd for are we fallen! our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers; we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth:
Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand;
The kingdom shall to Israel be restored:
Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turn'd
Into perplexity and new amaze:
For whither is he gone? what accident
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israel,
Send thy Messiah forth; the time is come!
Behold the kings of the earth, how they oppress
Thy chosen; to what highth their power unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of thee: arise, and vindicate
Thy glory; free thy people from their yoke!
But let us wait; thus far He hath perform'd,
Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him,
By his great prophet, pointed at and shown
In publick, and with him we have conversed:
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his Providence; He will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence:
Soon we shall see our Hope, our Joy, return.
  Thus they, out of their plaints, new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought:
But, to his mother Mary, when she saw

He also applies whispering to the flowing of a stream; to the air that plays upon the water, or by the side of it; and to the combined sounds of the breeze and the current. In the fourth book of this poem, he terms the river Ilyssus, a "whispering stream:" and in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 325, he describes

a tuft of shade that on a green
Stood whispering soft by a fresh fountain side.

In his 'Lycidas,' ver. 136, likewise, he addresses the

valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks.

See also 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 158, viii. 516: "The mild whisper of the refreshing breeze" he had before introduced in his Latin poem 'In Adventum Veris,' ver. 27, which might have been originally suggested to him by Virgil's "Culex," v. 152:

At circa passim fessæ cubuere capellæ,
Excelsisque super dumis: quos leniter adflans
Aura susurrantis possit confundere venti.—DUNSTER.

[1] *Plain fishermen (no greater men them call).*

Thus Spenser, in the beginning of his "Shepherd's Calendar":—

A shepherd's boy (no better do him call).—NEWTON.

Others return'd from baptism, not her Son,
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none;
Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and raised
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad:
O, what avails me now that honour high [m]
To have conceived of God, or that salute,—
Hail, highly favour'd, among women blest!
While I to sorrows am no less advanced,
And fears as eminent, above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore;
In such a season born, when scarce a shed
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
From the bleak air; a stable was our warmth,
A manger his; yet soon enforced to fly [n]
Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd
With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem:
From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years [o]; his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,

[m] *O, what avails me now that honour high, &c.*

In several parts of this speech Milton appears to have had Vida in his mind. In this opening of it, at verse 77, and from verse 87 to 92, we plainly trace him to Mary's lamentation under the cross, "Christ." v. 870:—

At non certe olim præpes demissus Olympo
Nuntius hæc pavidæ dederat promissa puellæ.
Sic una ante alias felix ego, sic ego cœli
Incedo regina? mea est hæc gloria magna,
Hic meus altus honos. Quo reges munera opima
Obtulerunt mihi post partus? Quo carmina læta
Cœlestes cecinere chori, si me ista manebat
Sors tamen, et vitam, cladem hanc visura, trahebam?
Felices illæ, natos quibus impius hausit
Insontes regis furor ipso in limine vitæ,
Dum tibi vana timens funus molitur acerbum.
Ut cuperem te diluvio cecidisse sub illo!
Hos, hos horribili monitu trepidantia corda
Terrificans senior luctus sperare jubebat,
Et cecinit fore, cum pectus mihi figeret ensis
Nunc alte mucro, nunc alte vulnus adactum.—DUNSTER.

[n] *Yet soon enforced to fly, &c.*

We may compare the following stanza of Giles Fletcher's "Christ's Victory in Heaven":—

And yet but newly he was infanted,
And yet already he was sought to die;
Yet scarcely born, already banished;
Not able yet to go, and forced to fly;
But scarcely fled away, when by and by
The tyrant's sword with blood is all defiled, &c.—DUNSTER.

[o] *In Nazareth*
Hath been our dwelling many years.

She mentions this as part of their distress; because the country of Galilee, whereof Nazareth was a city, was the most despised part of Palestine, despised by the Jews themselves: and therefore Nathaniel asketh Philip, John i. 46,—"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"—NEWTON.

This passage does not strike me exactly in the same light as it does Dr. Newton.

Little suspicious to any king[p]; but now,
Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in publick shown,
Son own'd from heaven by his Father's voice,
I look'd for some great change; to honour? no;
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israel[q], and to a sign
Spoken against, that through my very soul
A sword shall pierce: this is my favour'd lot,
My exaltation to afflictions high:
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest[r];
I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now? some great intent
Conceals him: when twelve years he scarce had seen,
I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
He could not lose himself[s], but went about
His Father's business[t]: what he meant I mused,
Since understand; much more his absence now

All this description of the early private life of our Saviour seems rather designed to contrast and to give more effect to the expectations of Mary, where she says,

> but now
> Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,
> By John the Baptist, and in publick shown,
> Son own'd from heaven by his Father's voice,
> I look'd for some great change.—DUNSTER.

[p] *His life*
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king.

Very possibly not without an intended reference to Milton's own way of life after the Restoration.—DUNSTER.

[q] *That to the fall and rising he should be*
Of many in Israel, &c.

See St. Luke ii. 34, 35. These are the afflictions that Mary notices: not the circumstances of dwelling in a disreputable place; but her anxiety about her son, and what she then suffered, and was still to suffer, upon his account.—DUNSTER.

[r] *Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest.*

How charmingly does Milton here verify the character he had before given of the blessed Virgin in the lines above!

> Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
> Motherly cares and fears got head.

We see at one view the piety of the saint, and the tenderness of the mother; and I think nothing can be conceived more beautiful and moving than the sudden start of fond impatience in the third line, "but where delays he now?" breaking in so abruptly upon the composed resignation expressed in the two preceding ones. The same beauty is continued in her suddenly checking herself, and resuming her calm and resigned character again in these words:—"Some great intent conceals him."—THYER.

[s] *He could not lose himself.*

A conceit and jingle unworthy of our author.—JOS. WARTON.

What jingle exists between *found* and *lose* I know not; but these are the associations of language, not conceits: contrariety is one of the principles of association.

[t] *But went about*
His Father's business.

"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke ii. 49.—DUNSTER.

Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
But I to wait with patience am inured;
My heart hath been a storehouse long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events[u].
  Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling[v]:
The while her Son, tracing the desert wild,
Sole, but with holiest meditations fed,
Into himself descended[w], and at once
All his great work to come before him set;
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on earth, and mission high:
For Satan, with sly preface to return,
Had left him vacant; and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his potentates in council sat:
There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy[x],
Solicitous and blank, he thus began:
  Princes, Heaven's ancient sons, ethereal thrones;
Demonian spirits now, from the element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd
Powers of fire, air, water, and earth beneath[y]!

[u] *My heart hath been a storehouse long of things*
And sayings laid up, portending strange events.

Alluding to what is said of her, Luke ii. 19. "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart:" and see also ver. 51. So consistent is the part that she acts here with her character in Scripture.—NEWTON.

By recurring to what passed at the river Jordan among Jesus's new disciples and followers upon his absence, and by making Mary express her maternal feelings upon it, the poet has given an extent and variety to his subject. It might perhaps be wished that all which he has put into the mouth of the Virgin respecting the early life of her son, had been confined solely to this place, instead of a part being incorporated in our Lord's soliloquy in the first book. There it seems awkwardly introduced; but here I conceive her speech might have been extended with good effect.—DUNSTER.

[v] *With thoughts*
Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling.

This is beautifully expressed. There is a passage somewhat similar, in 'Paradise Lost,' b. xii. 596, where Michael, having concluded what he had to show Adam from the mountain, and what he had farther to inform him of in narration there, says they must now descend from this "top of speculation;" and bidding Adam "go waken Eve," adds,

Her also I with gentle dreams have calm'd
Portending good, and all her spirits composed
To meek submission.—DUNSTER.

[w] *Into himself descended.*

Pers. Sat. iv. 23,—

Ut nemo in sese tentat descendere!—NEWTON.

[x] *There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy.*

In contrast to the boasting manner in which Satan had related his success against man, on his return to Pandæmonium, 'Paradise Lost,' b. x. 460.—DUNSTER.

[y] *Demonian spirits now, from the element*
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd
Powers of fire, air, water, and earth beneath!

It was a notion among the ancients, especially among the Platonists, that there were

(So may we hold our place and these mild seats
Without new trouble!) such an enemy
Is risen to invade us, who no less
Threatens than our expulsion down to hell;
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequence[a] was impower'd,
Have found him, view'd him, tasted him[a]; but find
Far other labour to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam, first of men:
Though Adam by his wife's allurement fell,
However to this man inferiour far[b];
If he be man by mother's side at least,
With more than human gifts from Heaven adorn'd,

demons in each element, some visible, others invisible, in the æther, and fire, and air, and water; so that no part of the world was devoid of soul, as Alcinous, in his summary of the Platonic doctrines, says, cap. 5. Michael Psellus, in his Dialogue concerning the operation of demons, from which Milton borrowed some of his notions of spirits, speaks to the same purpose; that there are many kinds of demons, and of all sorts of forms and bodies; so that the air above us and around us is full, the earth and the sea are full, and the inmost and deepest recesses: and he divides them into six kinds; the fiery, the aëry, the earthy, the watery, the subterraneous, and the lucifugous, p. 45, edit. Lutet. Paris. 1615. But the demons not only resided in the elements and partook of their nature, but also presided and ruled over them; as Jupiter in the air, Vulcan in the fire, Neptune in the water, Cybele in the earth; and Pluto under the earth.—NEWTON.

[a] *In full frequence.*

Milton, in his 'History of England,' has said, "The assembly was full and frequent:" and in 'Paradise Lost,' b. i. 797, the council of devils was "frequent and full." Here the adjective is formed into a substantive, as in b. i. 128: and Shakspeare uses it in the same manner, "Timon," a. v. s. 3:—

Tell Athens, in the frequence of degree,
From high to low throughout.—NEWTON.

[a] *Tasted him.*

This is a Grecism. Γεύομαι signifies not only *gusto*, but likewise *experior*, *periculum facio*.—DUNSTER.

[b] *However to this man inferiour far, &c.*

I have ventured to correct the punctuation. The passage in the first editions, and in Dr. Newton's, stands pointed thus:

However to this man inferiour far,
If he be man by mother's side at least,
With more than human gifts from Heaven adorn'd, &c.

On this, Mr. Calton observes: "The Tempter had no doubt of Christ's being a man by the mother's side; but the want of a comma in its due place after 'if he be man,' hath puzzled both the sense and the construction. *He is* must be understood at the end of the verse to support the syntax;

If he be man, by mother's side at least (he is)."

Dr. Newton has however preserved the pointing of Milton's own edition, because some, he says, may choose to join the whole together, and understand it thus: Satan had heard Jesus declared from Heaven, and knew him to be the Son of God; and now, after the trial he had made of him, he questions if he be man even by the mother's side; "If he be man by mother's side at least." He farther observes, that it is the purport of Satan, in this speech, not to say anything to the evil spirits that may lessen, but everything that may raise their idea of his antagonist. It seems to me that there can be no doubt respecting this passage. Dr. Newton certainly sees it in its true light: but I conceive his sense of it is strengthened and brought forward with additional beauty, and the whole of the sentence is rendered more clear and perfect, by the punctuation which I have adopted; and which I think most probable to have been intended by Milton.—DUNSTER.

Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds[c].
Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here: I summon all
Rather to be in readiness, with hand
Or counsel to assist; lest I, who erst
Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.
So spake the old serpent, doubting; and from all
With clamour was assured their utmost aid
At his command: when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissolutest spirit that fell,
The sensualest; and, after Asmodai,
The fleshliest incubus[d]; and thus advised:
Set women in his eye, and in his walk[e],

[c] *With more than human gifts from Heaven adorn'd,*
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.

Many lines of the 'Paradise Regained' have been censured as harsh and inharmonious; but even of these the greater part may be vindicated (as it has been done in some instances by Mr. Thyer), by showing that they were very far from being of that kind *quas incuria fudit;* and that many of them are peculiarly expressive, and were purposely designed as such by the poet. The three lines above cited seem, however, secure from every possibility of disapprobation: they are so eminently beautiful, that they must strike every ear that is not quite devoid of feeling and of taste. Mr. Thyer particularly notices the fine effect of the last line, and the dignity and significancy of the expression "amplitude of mind;" which he also supposes might have been suggested by the following passage in Tully's "Tusc. Disput." ii. 25:—"Hoc igitur tibi propone, amplitudinem et quasi quandam exaggerationem quam altissimam animi, quæ maxime eminet contemnendis et despiciendis doloribus, unam esse omnium rem pulcherrimam." —Dunster.

[d] *Belial, the dissolutest spirit that fell,*
The sensualest; and, after Asmodai,
The fleshliest incubus.

I have heard these three lines objected to as harsh and inharmonious, but in my opinion the very objection points out a remarkable beauty in them. It is true, they do not run very smoothly off the tongue; but then they are with much better judgment so contrived, that the reader is obliged to lay a particular emphasis, and to dwell for some time upon the word in each verse which most strongly expresses the character described, viz. "dissolutest, sensualest, fleshliest." This has a very good effect by impressing the idea more strongly upon the mind, and contributes even in some measure to increase our aversion to the odious character of Belial, by giving an air of detestation to the very tone of voice with which these verses must necessarily be read.—Thyer.

This is a just remark of Thyer; it is happy where the metre requires that the strongest accent should be thrown where it is most necessary to enforce the sense.

The character of Belial in the 'Paradise Lost,' and the part he sustains there, sufficiently show how properly he is introduced upon the present occasion. He is here said to be the "fleshliest incubus after Asmodai;" or "Asmadai," as it is written, 'Paradise Lost,' b. vi. 365; or 'Asmodeus,' b. iv. 168, the lustful angel who loved Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, and destroyed her seven husbands, as we read in the book of Tobit.—Newton.

[e] *Set women in his eye, &c.*

As this temptation is not mentioned in the Gospels, it could not with any propriety have been proposed to our Saviour; it is much more fitly made the subject of debate among the wicked spirits themselves. All that can be said in praise of the power of beauty, and all that can be alleged to depreciate it, is here summed up with greater force and elegance, than I ever remember to have seen in any other author.—Newton.

Among daughters of men the fairest found:
Many are in each region[f] passing fair
As the noon sky; more like to goddesses
Than mortal creatures; graceful and discreet;
Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach[g];
Skill'd to retire, and, in retiring, draw
Hearts after them[h] tangled in amorous nets.
Such object hath the power to soften and tame
Severest temper, smoothe the rugged'st brow[i],
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire[j], and lead

This temptation is something in the style of Tasso, where Satan suggests to Hedroart sending Armida to tempt and corrupt Godfrey, "Gier. Lib." c. iv.—DUNSTER.

[f] *Many are in each region, &c.*

Milton, with all his philosophical composure, appears to have been no stranger to the strong perceptions of the passion of love. In his first Elegy he speaks feelingly of the power of beauty, ver. 53:—

Ah! quoties dignæ stupui miracula formæ, &c.

In the seventh Elegy, written at the age of nineteen, he mentions the first time of his falling in love. He met an unknown fair on some public walks, in or about London; was suddenly and violently captivated, but had no opportunity of declaring his affection and gaining her acquaintance. He in vain ardently wishes to see her again, and flatters his imagination that her heart is not made of adamant. Five of his Italian Sonnets, and his Canzone, are amatorial; and were perhaps inspired by Leonora [Baroni], a young lady whom he had heard sing at Rome, and whom he celebrates in three Latin epigrams. But these were among the vanities of his youth. Yet at a much later and cooler period, when he wrote the present poem, we find him deeply impressed with at least a remembrance of the various and irresistible allurements of beauty. These exquisite lines, ver. 155 to ver. 169, were written by no Stoic. It is certain, that no poet has given more graceful and attractive images of beauty than Milton in his various portraits of Eve, each in a new aspect and attitude.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Virgin majesty with mild*
And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach.

Possibly suggested by Claudian, "Cons. Prob. et Ol." 91:—

Miscetur decori virtus, pulcherque severo
Armatur terrore pudor.

See also 'Paradise Lost,' b. ix. 489, &c.—DUNSTER.

Perhaps Milton remembered the description of beauty in Solomon's Song, ch. vi. 4:—"Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners."—TODD.

[h] *Skill'd to retire, and, in retiring, draw*
Hearts after them.

In the same manner, Milton, in his description of Eve, 'Paradise Lost,' b. viii. 504:—

Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,
The more desirable.—THYER.

[i] *Smoothe the rugged'st brow.*

Thus in 'Penseroso,' 58:—

Smoothing the rugged brow of night.—DUNSTER.

[j] *Draw out with credulous desire.*

This beautiful expression was formed partly upon Horace, Od. iv. i. 30—

Spes animi credula mutui:

and partly, as Mr. Thyer thinks, from a passage in the "Andria" of Terence, a. iv. s. 1:—

Non tibi satis esse hoc visum solidum est gaudium,
Nisi me lactasses amantem, et falsa spe produceres?—NEWTON.

At will the manliest, resolutest breast,
As the magnetick[k] hardest iron draws.
Women, when nothing else, beguiled the heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,
And made him bow, to the gods of his wives.
  To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd:
Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thyself; because of old
Thou thyself doat'st on womankind, admiring
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,
None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.
Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,
False titled sons of God[l], roaming the earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard[m],

"Credulous" might have been suggested by an ode of Horace, which Milton himself has translated:—

Qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea;
Qui semper vacuam, &c.—DUNSTER.

[k] *As the magnetick, &c.*

It should be the magnet, or magnetic stone. But Milton often converts the adjective, and uses it as the substantive.—NEWTON.

Lucian hath this simile in his "Imagines," vol. ii. p. 2, ed. Græv.:—"But if the fair one once look upon you, what is it that can get you from her? she will draw you after her at pleasure, bound hand and foot, just as the loadstone draws iron." We may observe, that Milton, by restraining the comparison to the power of beauty over the wisest men and the most stoical tempers, hath given it a propriety which is lost in a more general application.—CALTON.

Claudian, having very poetically described the powers of the magnet, concludes his "Idyllium," in a manner that possibly might have suggested to Milton some of the preceding lines:—

Quæ duras jungit concordia mentes?
Flagrat anhela silex, et amicam saucia sentit
Materiem, placidosque chalybs cognoscit amores.
Sic Venus horrificum belli compescere regem,
Et vultu mollire solet, cum sanguine præceps
Æstuat, et strictis mucronibus asperat iras
Sola feris occurrit equis, solvitque tumorem
Pectoris, et blando præcordia temperet igni.
Pax animo tranquilla datur, pugnasque calentes
Deserit, et rutilas declinat in oscula cristas.
Quæ tibi, sæve puer, non est permissa potestas?
Tu magnum superas fulmen, &c.—DUNSTER.

[l] *Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,*
False titled sons of God, &c.

It is to be lamented that our author has so often adopted the vulgar notion of the angels having commerce with women, founded upon that mistaken text of Scripture, Gen. vi. 2:—"The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." See 'Paradise Lost,' b. iii. 463, &c. But though he seems to favour that opinion, as we may suppose, to embellish his poetry; yet he shows elsewhere that he understood the text rightly, of the sons of Seth, who were the worshippers of the true God, intermarrying with the daughters of wicked Cain, 'Paradise Lost,' b. xi. 621, 625.—NEWTON.

[m] *Have we not seen, or by relation heard.*

This passage is censured by Dr. Warburton, as suiting only the poet speaking in his own person; but surely there is no impropriety in the arch-fiend's being well acquainted with the fables of the heathen mythology, and the amours and adventures of

In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,
In wood or grove, by mossy fountain side,
In valley or green meadow[n], to way-lay
Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amymone, Syrinx[o], many more
Too long[p]; then lay'st thy scapes[q] on names adored,

their gods, or (according to Milton's system) his own infernal compeers. If we censure this passage, we must still more decisively condemn one in the fourth book; where, in answer to Satan's speech, describing, while he shows it, the splendour of imperial Rome, our Lord, taking up the subject, carries on the description to the luxurious way of living among the Romans of that time, with this verse in a parenthesis,—

For I have also heard, perhaps have read.—DUNSTER.

[n] *In wood or grove, by mossy fountain side,*
In valley or green meadow.

Thus in Shakspeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," Puck, speaking of Oberon and Titania, says:—

And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, &c.—DUNSTER.

[o] *Calisto, Clymene,*
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amymone, Syrinx.

All these mistresses of the gods might have been furnished from Ovid, our author's favourite Latin poet.—DUNSTER.

[p] *Many more*
Too long.

A concise way of speaking for "many more too long to mention." The author had used it before, 'Paradise Lost,' b. iii. 473. Indeed, more would have been "too long," and it would have been better if he had not enumerated so many of the loves of the gods. These things are known to every school-boy, but add no dignity to a divine poem; and in my opinion are not the most pleasing subjects in painting any more than in poetry.—NEWTON.

Poetry, as strictly discriminated from prose, may be defined, elevated and ornamented language. Among the most allowed modes of elevating and decorating language, independent of metrical arrangement, mythological references and allusions, and classical imitations hold a principal place. A poet precluded from these would be miserably circumscribed; and might with equal or better effect relate the fable which he imagines, the historic facts which he records, or the precepts which he lays down, in that species of language which asks no ornaments but purity and perspicuity. A divine poem certainly requires to be written in the chastest style, and to be kept perfectly free from the glare of false ornament: but it must still be considered that the great reason of exhibiting any serious truths, and especially the more interesting facts of religious history, through the medium of poetry, is thereby more powerfully to attract the attention. Poetry, to please, must continue to be pleasing. In the beauty and propriety of his references and allusions, the poet shows the perfection of his taste and judgment, as much as in any other circumstance whatever; and Milton has eminently distinguished himself in this respect. How beautifully has he sprinkled his 'Paradise Lost' with the flowers of classic poetry, and the fictions of Greek and Roman mythology! And he has done this with so judicious a hand, with a spirit so reverent, that the most religiously delicate ear cannot but be captivated with it. I confess my surprise that Dr. Newton does not see the passage before us in this light. It appears to me not only in the highest degree justifiable, but absolutely as one of those *loci laudandi* which the best critics ever delight to exhibit from the works of the more eminent poets. Milton here admirably avails himself of the fabulous amours of the heathen deities: he transfers them to the fallen angels, and to Belial and "his lusty crew;" and by the judicious application of these disgraceful tales, he gives them a propriety which they never before possessed; he furnishes even the school-boy with a moral to the fable which he has been reading; and recalls to maturer minds the classical beauty of these fabulous descriptions, which at once relieve and adorn his divine poem.—DUNSTER.

Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan [r],
Satyr, or Faun, or Sylvan? But these haunts
Delight not all: among the sons of men,
How many have with a smile made small account
Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd
All her assaults, on worthier things intent!
Remember that Pellean conquerour [s],
A youth, how all the beauties of the East
He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd [t];
How he, surnamed of Africa, dismiss'd,
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid [u].
For Solomon, he lived at ease; and, full
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state;
Thence to the bait of women [v] lay exposed:
But he, whom we attempt, is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,

[q] *Thy scapes.*

This is a Gallicism, *échappée*, a prank or frolic.—DUNSTER.

[r] *Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan.*

Calisto, Semele, and Antiopa, were mistresses to Jupiter; Clymene and Daphne, to Apollo; and Syrinx, to Pan. Both here and elsewhere, Milton considers the gods of the heathens as demons or devils. Thus, in the Septuagint version of the Psalms, Πάντες οἱ θεοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν δαιμόνια, Psalm xcvi. 5, and likewise in the Vulgate Latin, "Quoniam omnes Dii gentium dæmonia." And the notion of the demons having commerce with women in the shape of heathen gods is very ancient, and is expressly asserted by Justin Martyr, "Apol." i. p. 10, and 33, edit. Thirlbii.—NEWTON.

[s] *Remember that Pellean conquerour, &c.*

Alexander the Great was born at Pella in Macedonia: his continence and clemency to Darius's queen and daughters, and the other Persian ladies whom he took captive after the battle of Issus, are commended by the historians: "Tum quidem ita se gessit, ut omnes ante cum reges et continentia et clementia vincerentur: virgines enim regias excellentis formæ tam sancte habuit, quam si eodem quo ipse parente genitæ forent: conjugem ejusdem, quam nulla ætatis suæ pulchritudine corporis vicit, adeo ipse non violavit, ut summam adhibuerit curam, ne quis captivo corpori illuderet," &c., Quint. Curt. lib. iii. cap. 9. He was then a young conqueror, of about twenty-three years of age; "a youth," as Milton expresses it.—NEWTON.

See Juvenal, Sat. x. 168:

Unus Pellæo juveni non sufficit orbis.—DUNSTER.

[t] *How all the beauties of the East*
He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd.

Alexander, we know from history, did not "slightly overpass all the beauties of the East."—DUNSTER.

[u] *How he, surnamed of Africa, dismiss'd,*
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid.

The continence of Scipio Africanus at the age of twenty-four, and his generosity in restoring a beautiful Spanish lady to her husband and friends, are celebrated by Polybius, Livy, Valerius Maximus, and various other authors.—NEWTON.

[v] *Thence to the bait of women, &c.*

This remark, applied by Satan to Solomon, the example cited by Belial, induces me to notice the description of Belial by Wierus, "Pseudomonarchia Dæmonum," edit. Basil. 1582, p. 919. "Sunt quidam necromantici, qui asserunt ipsum Salomonem, quodam die astutia cujusdam mulieris seductum, orando se inclinasse versus simulacrum Belial nomine," &c. Wierus doubts this particular circumstance. But see 1 Kings xi. 1-8, and 'Par. Lost,' b. i. 401, and the present book, ver. 169.—TODD.

Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things. What woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
Of fond desire[w]? Or should she, confident,
As sitting queen adored on beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt[x]
To enamour, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove, so fables tell[y];
How would one look from his majestick brow,
Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill[z],
Discountenance her despised, and put to rout
All her array; her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe! for beauty stands
In the admiration only of weak minds

[w] *On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye*
Of fond desire?

The "eye of fond desire" is very beautifully expressed by Æschylus, whom our author perhaps had in view, "Suppl." ver. 101.—Thyer.

Æschylus has also the immediate expression, "the eye of desire," in "Prometh." ver. 655.—Dunster.

[x] *Or should she, confident,*
As sitting queen adored on beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt, &c.

This is clearly from the same palette and pencil as the following highly-coloured passage, 'Par. Lost.,' b. viii. 59:—

With goddess-like demeanour forth she went,
Not unattended; for on her as queen
A pomp of winning Graces waited still,
And from about her shot darts of desire
Into all eyes to wish her still in sight.—Dunster.

[y] *So fables tell.*

These words look as if the poet had forgot himself, and spoke in his own person rather than in the character of Satan.—Newton.

[z] *One look from his majestick brow,*
Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill.

Here is the construction that we so often meet with in Milton: "from his majestick brow," that is, from the majestic brow of him seated as on the top of Virtue's hill: and the expression of "Virtue's hill," was probably in allusion to the rocky eminence on which the Virtues are placed in the Table of Cebes; or the arduous ascent up the hill, to which Virtue is represented pointing in the best designs of the Judgment of Hercules.—Newton.

Milton's meaning here is best illustrated by a passage in Shakspeare, which most probably he had in his mind. Hamlet, in the scene with his mother, pointing to the picture of his father, says,

See what a grace was seated on this brow!
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars to threaten or command, &c.

See also "Love's Labour Lost," a. iii. s. 4. "Greatness, nobleness, authority, and awe," says Bentley, "are by all Greek and Latin poets placed in the forehead." See 'Par. Lost,' b. vii. 509. ix. 538.

And Spenser's Belphœbe:—

Her ivory forehead, full of bounty brave,
Like a broad table did itself dispread;
All good and honour might therein be read,
And there their dwelling was.—Dunster.

Led captive[a]; cease to admire, and all her plumes
Fall flat, and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abash'd[b].
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy; with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise;
Rocks, whereon greatest men have oftest wreck'd;
Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of nature, not beyond:
And now I know he hungers, where no food
Is to be found, in the wide wilderness:
The rest commit to me; I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay.
He ceased[c], and heard their grant in loud acclaim;

[a] *For beauty stands*
In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive.

Among Milton's early Latin Elegies, we find one, the seventh, of the amatory kind: but when he published his Latin poems, eighteen years afterwards, he thought it necessary to add to it ten lines, apologising for the puerile weakness, or rather vacancy, of his mind, that could admit such an impression.—DUNSTER.

[b] *Cease to admire, and all her plumes*
Fall flat, and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abash'd.

This is a very beautiful and apposite allusion to the peacock; speaking of which bird, Pliny notices the circumstance of its spreading its tail under a sense of admiration:—"Gemmantes laudatus expandit colores, adverso maxime sole, quia sic fulgentius radiant." Nat. Hist. l. x. c. 20. Tasso compares Armida, in all the pride and vanity of her beauty and ornaments, to a peacock with its tail spread, c. xvi. st. 24. But Milton had here in his mind Ovid, "De Arte Am." i. 627:—

Laudatas ostentat avis Junonia pennas;
Si tacitus spectes, illa recondit opes.—DUNSTER.

[c] *He ceased.*

Our Lord (ver. 110) is, in a brief but appropriate description, again presented to us in the wilderness. The poet, in the mean time, makes Satan return to his infernal council, to report the bad success of his first attempt, and to demand their counsel and assistance in an enterprise of so much difficulty. This he does in a brief and energetic speech. Hence arises a debate; or at least a proposition on the part of Belial, and a rejection of it by Satan, of which I cannot sufficiently express my admiration. The language of Belial is exquisitely descriptive of the power of beauty; without a single word introduced, or even a thought conveyed, that is unbecoming in its place in this divine poem. Satan's reply is eminently fine: his imputing to Belial, as the most dissolute of the fallen angels, the amours attributed by the poets and mythologists to the heathen gods, while it is replete with classic beauty, furnishes an excellent moral to those extravagant fictions; and his description of the little effect which the most powerful enticements can produce on the resolute mind of the virtuous, while it is heightened with many beautiful turns of language, is, in its general tenor, of the most superior and dignified kind. Indeed, all this part of his speech (from ver. 191 to ver. 225) seems to breathe such a sincere and deep sense of the charms of real goodness, that we almost forget who is the speaker: at least, we readily subscribe to what he had said of himself in the first book:

I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate, and admire,
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous.

After such sentiments so expressed, it might have been thought difficult for the poet to return to his subject, by making the arch-fiend resume his attempts against the

Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of spirits, likest to himself in guile[d],
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part;
Then to the desert takes with these his flight;
Where still from shade to shade the Son of God,
After forty days' fasting, had remain'd,
Now hungering first[e], and to himself thus said:
Where will this end? four times ten days I've pass'd

Divine Person, the commanding majesty of whose invincible virtue he had just been describing with such seemingly heartfelt admiration. This is managed with much address, by Satan's proposing to adopt such modes of temptation as are apt to prevail most where the propensities are virtuous, and where the disposition is amiable and generous: and, by the immediate return of the tempter and his associates to the wilderness, the poem advances towards the height of its argument.—DUNSTER.

[d] *To him takes a chosen band*
Of spirits, likest to himself in guile.

"Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself," Matt. xii. 45.—DUNSTER.

[e] *Now hungering first.*

There seems, I think, to be a little inaccuracy in this place. It is plain, by the Scripture account, that our Saviour hungered before the devil first tempted him by proposing to him his making stones into bread, and Milton's own account in the first book is consistent with this: is there not therefore a seeming impropriety in saying that he "now first hungered;" especially, considering the time that must have necessarily elapsed during Satan's convening and consulting with his companions?—THYER.

Milton comprises the principal action of the poem in four successive days. This is the second day, in which no positive temptation occurs; for Satan had left Jesus (as was said, ver. 116 of this book) "vacant," i. e. unassailed, that day. Previous to the tempter's appearing at all, it is said (b. i. 303) that our blessed Lord had "passed full forty days" in the wilderness. All that is here meant is that he was not hungry till the forty days were ended; and accordingly our Saviour himself presently says that, during the time, he

human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite.

As to the time necessary for convening the infernal council, there is a space of twenty-four hours taken for the devil to go up to "the region of mid air," where his council was sitting, and where we are told he went "with speed" (ver. 117 of this book); and for him to debate the matter with his council and return "with his chosen band of spirits:" for it was the commencement of night when he left our Saviour at the end of the first book; and it is now "the hour of night" (ver. 260), when he is returned. But it must also be considered that spiritual beings are not supposed to require, for their actions, the time necessary to human ones; otherwise we might proceed to calculate the time requisite for the descent of Michael, or Raphael, to Paradise, and criticise the 'Paradise Lost' accordingly. But Raphael, in the eighth book of that poem, says to Adam, inquiring concerning celestial motions:—

The swiftness of those circles attribute,
Though numberless, to his omnipotence,
That to corporeal substances could add
Speed almost spiritual: me thou think'st not slow,
Who since the morning hour set out from heaven
Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived
In Eden; distance inexpressible
By numbers that have name.

We are also expressly told by St. Luke, when the devil took our Lord up into a high mountain, that "he showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time," Luke iv. 5.—DUNSTER.

Wandering this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite; that fast
To virtue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here; if nature need not,
Or God support nature without repast
Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
But now I feel I hunger, which declares
Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain: so it remain
Without this body's wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of famine fear no harm;
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts, that feed
Me hungering more to do my Father's will[f].
It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Communed in silent walk, then laid him down[g]
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven[h]; there he slept,
And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet:
Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood[i],
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn,
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought:

[f] *Me hungering more to do my Father's will.*

In allusion to our Saviour's words, John iv. 34:—"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."—NEWTON.

But with reference also to, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," Matt. v. 6.—DUNSTER.

[g] *Communed in silent walk, then laid him down.*

Agreeable to what we find in the Psalms, iv. 4:—"Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still."—NEWTON.

[h] *The hospitable covert nigh*
Of trees thick interwoven.

Thus Horace, Od. II. iii. 9:—

Qua pinus ingens albaque populus
Umbram hospitalem consociare amant
Ramis.

And Virgil, Georg. iv. 24:—

Obviaque hospitiis teneat frondentibus arbos.

Milton also, in 'Comus,' ver. 186:—

Such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.—DUNSTER.

[i] *He by the brook of Cherith stood, &c.*

Alluding to the account of Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 5, 6; and xix. 4. And Daniel's living upon pulse and water, rather than the portion of the king's meat and drink, is celebrated, Dan. i. So that, as our dreams are often composed of the matter of our waking thoughts, our Saviour is with great propriety supposed to dream of sacred persons and subjects. Lucretius, iv. 960:—

Et quoi quisque fere studio devinctus adhæret,
Aut quibus in rebus multum sumus ante morati,
Atque in qua ratione fuit contenta magis mens,
In somnis eadem plerumque videmur obire.—NEWTON.

He saw the prophet also, how he fled
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper; then how, awaked,
He found his supper on the coals prepared,
And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof sufficed him forty days:
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
Thus wore out night; and now the herald lark
Left his ground-nest, high towering to descry
The morn's approach, and greet her with his song [j]:
As lightly from his grassy couch [k] up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream [l];
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked.
Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw [m];

[j] *To descry*
The morn's approach, and greet her with his song.

This is a beautiful thought, which modern wit hath added to the stock of antiquity. We may see it rising, though out of a low hint of Theocritus, like the bird from his "thatch'd pallat," Idyll. x. 50.

Chaucer leads the way to the English poets, in four of the finest lines in all his works, "Knight's Tale," 1493:—

The merry lark, messengere of the day,
Salewith in her song the morrow gray;
And firy Phebus risith up so bright,
That all the Orient laugheth at the sight.

In the same manner, Spenser, "Faery Queen," I. xi. 51:—

When Una did her mark
Climb to her charet all with flowers spread.
From heaven high to chase the cheerless dark;
With merry notes her loud salutes the mounting lark.—CALTON.

Thus, in 'Comus,' the early hour of morning is marked by the lark's rousing from his thatch'd pallat, ver. 315; and the lark, high-towering and greeting the morn with her song, is thus beautifully described in P. Fletcher's "Purple Island," c. ix. st. 2:—

The cheerful lark, mounting from early bed,
With sweet salutes awakes the drowsy light:
The earth she left, and up to heaven is fled:
There chants her Maker's praises out of sight.

See also Spenser's Astrophel, st. vi.:—

As summers lark, that with her song doth greete
The dawning day, &c.—DUNSTER.

[k] *From his grassy couch.*

So in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 600:—

For beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk.—THYER.

[l] *And found all was but a dream.*

'Paradise Lost,' b. v. 92.

But O! how glad I waked,
To find this but a dream!—DUNSTER.

[m] *If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd;*
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw.

This mode of repetition our poet is fond of, and has frequently used with singular effect.

Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove[n],
With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud:
Thither he bent his way, determined there
To rest at noon[o]; and enter'd soon the shade
High roof'd, and walks beneath, and alleys brown[p],

See 'Comus,' v. 221, &c. Thus also, in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 640, a delightful description of morning, evening, and night is beautifully recapitulated.—DUNSTER.

[n] *Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove, &c.*

The tempter here is the magician of the Italian poets. This "pleasant grove" is a magical creation in the desert, designed as a scene suited for the ensuing temptation of the banquet. Thus Tasso lays the scene of the sumptuous banquet, which Armida provides for her lovers, amidst

> High trees, sweet meadows, waters pure and good,
> Under the curtain of the greenwood shade,
> Beside the brook, upon the velvet grass.
>
> FAIRFAX'S "Tasso," c. x. 63, 64.

The whole of Milton's description here is very beautiful; and I rather wonder that the noble author of the "Anecdotes of Painting" did not subjoin it to his citations from the 'Paradise Lost,' in the "Observations on Modern Gardening." He there ascribes to our author the having foreseen, with "the prophetic eye of taste," our modern style of gardening. It may however be questioned, whether his idea of a garden was much, if at all, elevated above that of his contemporaries. In the 'Comus,' speaking of the gardens of the Hesperides, he describes "cedarn alleys" and "crisped shades and bowers;" and in his 'Penseroso,' "retired leisure" is made to please itself in "trim gardens." Mr. Warton, in a note on the latter passage, observes that Milton had changed his ideas of a garden when he wrote his 'Paradise Lost:' but the Paradise which he there describes is not a garden, either ancient or modern: it is in fact a country in its natural, unornamented state; only rendered beautiful, and (which is more essential to happiness in a hot climate) at all times perfectly habitable, from its abundance of pleasingly-disposed shade and water, and its consequent verdure and fertility. From all such poetical delineations, as from Nature herself, the landscape-gardener may certainly enrich his fancy and cultivate his taste. The poet in the mean time contributes to the perfection of art, not by laying down rules for it, but by his exquisite descriptions of the more beautiful scenes of nature, which it is the office of art to imitate and to represent. One merit of our modern art of laying out ground, independent of the beauty of its scenery, is its being peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of our climate. A modern English pleasure-ground would not be considered as a Paradise on the sultry plains of Assyria, if it could be formed or exist there: accordingly, another mode of gardening has always prevailed in hot countries, which, though it would be the heighth of absurdity to adopt in our own island, may be well defended in its proper place by the best of all pleas, necessity. The reader may see this question fully discussed with great taste and judgment, by my learned friend Dr. Falconer, in his "Historical View of the Taste for Gardening and laying out grounds among the Nations of Antiquity."—DUNSTER.

[o] *Determined there*
To rest at noon.

The custom of retiring to the shade and reposing, in hot countries, during the extreme heat of the day, is frequently alluded to by Milton, in his 'Paradise Lost.' See b. iv. 627; b. v. 230 and 300; and b. ix. 401.—DUNSTER.

[p] *High roof'd, and walks beneath, and alleys brown.*

Such are also the arched over-shading groves of Spenser, with their walks, alleys, and arbours, "Faer. Q." I. i. 7.

> A shady grove not far away they spied, &c.
> And all within were paths and alleys wide.

See also "Faer. Q." IV. x. 25. "High-roof'd" reminds us of some of Milton's descriptions in the 'Paradise Lost,' as in b. ix. 1037.

> A shady bank
> Thick overhead with verdant roof imbower'd.

See also b. iv. 692, 772; b. v. 137. The deep shade produced by great masses

That open'd in the midst a woody scene[q]:
Nature's own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art[r]),
And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs[s]: he view'd it round;
When suddenly a man before him stood;
Not rustick as before, but seemlier clad[t],
As one in city, or court, or palace bred;
And with fair speech these words to him address'd:
With granted leave[u] officious I return;

of wood, is a favourite object of our poet's description. The epithet "brown" that he applies to it (as here "alleys brown"), he borrowed from the Italian poets; as has been justly observed by Mr. Thyer. See his notes on 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 246, and b. ix. 1086.—DUNSTER.

[q] *That open'd in the midst a woody scene.*

Here is some resemblance of Homer's description of the bower of Calypso, Odyss. v. 63. 73.

It may be observed, that "a various sylvan scene" was possibly suggested by Milton's "happy rural seat of various view," 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 246.—DUNSTER.

[r] *Nature's own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art).*

Thus Spenser, in his description of the garden of Acrasia, "Faer. Qu." II. xii. 58:—

And, that which all fair workes doth most aggrace,
The art, which all that wrought, appeared in no place.
One would have thought (so cunningly the rude
And scorned parts were mingled with the fine),
That Nature had for wantonness ensude
Art, and that Art at Nature did repine;
So striving each the other to undermine,
Each did the other's work more beautify, &c.

But here he is not a little indebted to his predecessor Tasso, in his description of the garden of Armida, "Gier. Lib." c. xvi. st. 9, 10. See also "Faer. Qu." II. v. 29.—DUNSTER.

[s] *The haunt*
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs.

They who think that all poetry ought to consist of picturesque imagery and material descriptions, cannot refuse their admiration to the exquisite scenery here exhibited, to which nothing in Spenser, Thomson, or Cowper, can be compared.

[t] *Not rustick as before, but seemlier clad.*

The tempter is very properly made to change his appearance and habit with the temptation. In the former book, when he came to tempt our Saviour to turn the stones into bread to satisfy their hunger, he appeared as a poor old man in "rural weeds;" but now, when he comes to offer a magnificent entertainment, he is "seemlier clad," and appears as a wealthy citizen or a courtier: and here "with fair speech," he addresses his words; there, it was only "with word thus utter'd spake." These lesser particulars have a propriety in them, which is well worthy of the reader's observation.—NEWTON.

[u] *With granted leave.*

It is true that Satan at parting, in the conclusion of the former book, had asked leave to come again; but all the answer that our Saviour returned was,

Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st
Permission from above.

But as the tempter must needs have been a most impudent being, it was perfectly in character to represent him as taking "permission" for "granted leave."—NEWTON.

The "granted leave" here is "permission from above." In answer to Satan's request (b. i. 492),

Disdain not such access to me,

our Saviour had said,

Do as thou find'st
Permission from above.

Satan therefore here introduces himself with a boast of "that permission from him,"

But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild solitude so long should bide,
Of all things destitute; and, well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness;
The fugitive bond-woman, with her son[v],
Outcast Nebaioth, yet found he relief
By a providing angel; all the race
Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God
Rain'd from heaven manna; and that prophet bold[w],
Native of Thebez, wandering here was fed[x]

who had before given up Job to be tempted by him, b. i. 368. Indeed our author makes the Deity, in his speech to Gabriel, say, speaking of our blessed Lord, b. i. 140,

> This man, born and now upgrown,
> To show him worthy of his birth divine
> And high prediction, henceforth I expose
> To Satan; let him tempt and now assay
> His utmost subtlety.—DUNSTER.

[v] *The fugitive bond-woman, with her son, &c.*

Hagar, who fled from the face of her mistress, Gen. xvi. 6, is therefore called a "fugitive:" her son was not a fugitive, but an "outcast;" so exact was our author in the use of his epithets. But then what shall we say to the words "Outcast Nebaioth?" For Nebaioth was the eldest son of Ishmael (Gen. xxv. 13), and grandson of Abraham and Hagar. He seems here to be put by mistake for Ishmael; at least, it is not usual to call the father by the name of the son.—NEWTON.

There is no immediate instance of a grandson being substituted for a son in Scripture: and yet the curse is addressed to Canaan (Gen. ix. 25), though it was Ham, his father, who had offended Noah: but Nebaioth and Canaan both gave names to a people descended from them, viz. the Canaanites and Nabathæans; and therefore each of their names might attach to their fathers as the first stock of their respective nations. Ishmael was not born when Hagar fled from her mistress's face, Gen. xvi. 6. But the term "fugitive" here refers to what is said of her, Gen. xxi., when she and her son were both cast out at the instigation of Sarah, and with the approbation of God; when also, in her distress in the wilderness, "she cast the child from her to die." This moment of distress is the exact moment of Milton's description.—DUNSTER.

[w] *And that prophet bold.*

In the character of Elijah, as it stands portrayed in Scripture, we trace a spirit and resolution of the most dignified kind. Hence it is said, 1 Maccab. ii. 58, that "he was taken up into heaven for being fervent and zealous for the law." The first twelve verses of the 48th chapter of Ecclesiasticus are entirely occupied with a panegyric upon him; in which it is said, that "he stood up like fire," and that "his words burned like a lamp:" which expressions must be understood to imply a peculiar fervour of zeal and spirit. Milton seems to have been much struck with the character of this "prophet bold," as he here terms him. He had before, ver. 16 of this book, called him the "great Thisbite," and has mentioned him no less than four times in this poem, and three times in his juvenile Latin poems. El. iv. 'In Prodit. Bombard.' and 'In Obit. Præsul. Eliens.' But it may be observed (and I hope without impropriety), that possibly he had a political predilection for this eminent prophet, to whose lot it fell to resist the tyranny of wicked kings, and to denounce the judgments of God against them. In this part of his office he particularly manifested his undaunted spirit; on which account he might be a favourite Scripture character with our author. Compare Sylvester's "Du Bartas," ed. 1621, p. 480:—

> Thesbite Elijah—
> Who, burning bold in spirit and speech, cries out
> In Ahab's ear, and all his court about,
> "O impious Ahab!"—DUNSTER.

[x] *Wandering here was fed.*

It appears that Milton conceived the wilderness where Hagar wandered with her son, and where the Israelites were fed with manna, and where Elijah retreated from the

Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed.
  To whom thus Jesus:—What concludest thou hence?
They all had need; I, as thou seest, have none.
  How hast thou hunger then? Satan replied.
Tell me, if food were now before thee set,
Wouldst thou not eat?—Thereafter as I like
The giver, answer'd Jesus [y].—Why should that
Cause thy refusal? said the subtle fiend:
Hast thou not right to all created things?
Owe not all creatures by just right to thee
Duty and service [z], nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their power? Nor mention I
Meats by the law unclean, or offer'd first
To idols; those young Daniel could refuse:
Nor proffer'd by an enemy; though who
Would scruple that, with want oppress'd? Behold,
Nature ashamed, or, better to express,
Troubled, that thou shouldst hunger, hath purvey'd
From all the elements her choicest store [a],
To treat thee, as beseems, and as her Lord,
With honour: only deign to sit and eat.

rage of Jezebel, to be the same with the wilderness where our Saviour was tempted: and yet it is certain that they were very different places; for the wilderness, where Hagar wandered, was "the wilderness of Beersheba," Gen. xxi. 14; and where the Israelites were fed with manna, was "the wilderness of Sin," Exod. xvi. 1; and where Elijah retreated, was "in the wilderness, a day's journey from Beersheba," 1 Kings, xix. 4; and where our Saviour was tempted, was "the wilderness near Jordan." But our author considers all that tract of country as one and the same wilderness, though distinguished by different names from the different places adjoining.—NEWTON.

[y] *Wouldst thou not eat?—Thereafter as I like*
The giver, answer'd Jesus.

Thus in 'Comus,' when the enchanter offers the cup to the Lady, and presses her to drink of it, she tells him,

Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none
But such as are good men can give good things, &c.—DUNSTER.

[z] *Hast thou not right to all created things?*
Owe not all creatures by just right to thee
Duty and service, &c., &c.

This part of the tempter's speech alludes to the heavenly declaration which he had heard at Jordan, "This is my beloved Son," &c. One may observe too, that it is much the same sort of flattering address with that which he had before made use of to seduce Eve, 'Paradise Lost,' b. ix. 539:—

Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine,
By gift, &c.—THYER.

[a] *Hath purvey'd*
From all the elements her choicest store.

The Latin poets have similar passages, descriptive of that unbounded luxury, which ransacked all the elements to furnish out the requisite delicacies of their banquets. Thus Juv. Sat. xi. 14,

Interea gustus elementa per omnia quærunt.—DUNSTER.

He spake no dream [b]; for, as his words had end,
Our Saviour, lifting up his eyes, beheld,
In ample space under the broadest shade,
A table richly spread [c], in regal mode [d],
With dishes piled, and meats of noblest sort
And savour; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built [e], or from the spit, or boil'd,
Gris-amber-steam'd; all fish, from sea or shore,
Freshet [f] or purling brook, of shell or fin,

[b] *He spake no dream.*

This was no dream, as before, ver. 264, but a reality.—NEWTON.

[c] *A table richly spread, &c.*

This temptation is not recorded in Scripture, but is however invented with great consistency, and very aptly fitted to the present condition of our Saviour. This way of embellishing his subject is a privilege which every poet has a just right to, provided he observes harmony and decorum in his hero's character; and one may farther add, that Milton had in this particular place a still stronger claim to an indulgence of this kind; since it was a pretty general opinion among the fathers, that our Saviour underwent many more temptations than those which are mentioned by the evangelists: nay, Origen goes so far as to say, that he was every day, whilst he continued in the wilderness, attacked by a fresh one. The beauties of this description are too obvious to escape any reader of taste. It is copious, and yet expressed with a very elegant conciseness: every proper circumstance is mentioned; and yet it is not at all clogged or encumbered, as is often the case, with too tedious a detail of particulars. It was a scene entirely fresh to our author's imagination, and nothing like it had before occurred in his 'Paradise Lost;' for which reason he has been the more diffuse, and laboured it with greater care, with the same good judgment that makes him in other places avoid expatiating on scenes which he had before described. In a word, it is in my opinion worked up with great art and beauty, and plainly shows the crudity of that notion which so much prevails among superficial readers, that Milton's genius was upon the decay when he wrote his 'Paradise Regained.'—THYER.

[d] *In regal mode.*

"Regal mode" was probably intended to glance at the luxury and expense of the court at that time: it is however well covered by classical authority. Thus Sil. Ital. xi. 272,

> Instituunt de more epulas, festamque per urbem
> Regifice extructis celebrant convivia mensis.

And Virgil, Æn. vi. 604:—

> epulæque ante ora paratæ
> Regifico luxu.—DUNSTER.

[e] *In pastry built.*

The pastry, in the beginning of the last century, was frequently of considerable magnitude and solidity: of such kind must have been the pie, in which Geoffrey Hudson, afterwards King James's dwarf, when eight years old, was served up to table at an entertainment given by the Duke of Buckingham. We may suppose this pie was not considerably larger than was usual on such occasions; otherwise the joke would have lost much of its effect from something extraordinary being expected. A species of mural pastry seems to have prevailed in some of the preceding centuries, when artificial representations of castles, towers, &c., were very common at all great feasts, and called "suttleties," "subtilties," or "sotilties." Leland, in his account of the entertainment at the inthronization of Archbishop Warham in 1504 ("Collectanea," vol. vi.), mentions "a suttlety of three stages, with vanes and towres embattled," and "a warner with eight towres embattled, and made with flowres;" which possibly meant made in pastry. In the catalogue of the expenses at this feast, there is a charge for wax and sugar, *in operatione de le sotilties*. Probably the wax and sugar were employed to render the paste of flour more adhesive and tenacious, the better to support itself when moulded into such a variety of forms.—DUNSTER.

[f] *Freshet.*

"Freshet," a stream of fresh water. So Browne, in his "Brit. Pastorals," 1613, b. ii. s. iii. of fish, who

> Now love the freshet, and then love the sea.—TODD.

And exquisitest name[g], for which was drain'd
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Africk coast[h]:
(Alas, how simple, to these cates compared,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve[i]!)
And at a stately sideboard[j], by the wine,
That fragrant smell diffused[k], in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas[l]; distant more

[g] *And exquisitest name.*

This alludes to that species of Roman luxury, which gave exquisite names to fish of exquisite taste, such as that they called *cerebrum Jovis:* they extended this even to a very capacious dish, as that they called *clypeum Minervæ.* The modern Italians fall into the same wantonness of luxurious impiety; as when they call their exquisite wines by the names of *lacrymæ Christi* and *lac Virginis.*—WARBURTON.

[h] *For which was drain'd*
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Africk coast.

The fish are brought to furnish this banquet from all the different parts of the world then known: from Pontus, or the Euxine sea, in Asia; from the Lucrine bay, in Italy; and from the coast of Africa: all which places are celebrated for different kinds of fish by the authors of antiquity.—NEWTON.

Milton had here in his mind the excessive luxury of the Romans in the article of fish; in regard to which it is said by Juvenal, that, having exhausted their own seas, they were obliged to be supplied from their distant provinces.—DUNSTER.

Pliny observes how quickly all sorts of fish came to perfection in the Pontus Euxinus:—"Piscium genus omne præcipua celeritate adolescit, maxime in Ponto. Causa, multitudo amnium dulces inferentium aquas," l. ix. 15. Horace notices the shell-fish of the Lucrine lake, Epod. ii. 49:—"Non me Lucrina juverint conchylia;" and particularly commends its muscles, Sat. II. iv. 32. Martial records the excellence of the Lucrine oysters, lib. iii. Ep. ix. 3. These were so much in request, that *Lucrina* alone is used by the last-mentioned poet to signify oysters, l. vi. Ep. xi. 5, and l. xii. Ep. xlviii. 4. Aulus Gellius, in his chapter on Roman luxury, notices the lamprey from the Straits of Gibraltar, *Muræna Tartessia*, l. vii. 16. It is related by Athenæus (b. i. p. 7) that the celebrated Roman glutton Apicius, having been used to eat at Minturnæ a sort of cray-fish, which exceeded the lobsters of Alexandria in bigness, when he was told there were some of these fish still larger to be found on the coast of Africa, sailed thither immediately, in spite of a great many inconveniences. The fishermen, who were apprised of the object of his voyage, met him with the largest they had taken; but as soon as he found they had none which exceeded those he had been used to eat at Minturnæ, he sailed back instantly without going on shore.—DUNSTER.

[i] *That diverted Eve!*

Diverted is here used in the Latin signification of *diverto*, "to turn aside."—NEWTON.

[j] *And at a stately sideboard, &c.*

As the scene of this entertainment lay in the East, Milton has with great judgment thrown in this and the following particulars to give it an air of Eastern grandeur; as in that part of the world, it is well known, a great part of the pomp and splendour of their feasts consists in their having a great number of beautiful slaves of both sexes, to attend and divert the guests with music and singing.—THYER.

[k] *Wine,*
That fragrant smell diffused.

The ancients prized their wines according to their fragrance. Οἶνος ἀνθοσμίας was the term of supreme commendation among the Greeks.—DUNSTER.

[l] *Than Ganymed or Hylas.*

These were two most beautiful youths; the one beloved by Jupiter, to whom he was cup-bearer; the other, by Hercules, for whom he drew water: they are therefore both properly mentioned upon this occasion.—NEWTON.

Milton had mentioned these two boys in his seventh Elegy, where he compares the

Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood [m],
Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of the Hesperides [n], that seem'd
Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabled since [o]
Of faery damsels, met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore [p].

God of Love to them. In which he had most probably an eye to Spenser's description of Fancy in his Mask of Cupid, "Faer. Qu." III. xii. 7:—

The first was Fancy, like a lovely boy, &c.—DUNSTER.

Milton here alludes to the description of the costly tables of the Romans, their waiters, &c., given by an author, to whose opinions he was certainly partial: "Seneca describes the order and number of their waiters more particularly: they had waiting on them, saith he, *puerorum infelicium greges*, whole troopes of vnfortunate Ganymedes," &c. Hakewill's "Apol. of the Power and Providence of God," fol. ed. 1630, p. 376.—TODD.

[m] *Now solemn stood.*

The same idea of graceful attitude is given in a line of 'Comus,' where the enchanter, speaking to the Lady of her brothers, whom he professes to have seen, says,

Their port was more than human as they stood.

Hamlet likewise, in the scene with his mother, thus exemplifies the gracefulness of his father's person:—

A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;

where "station" is attitude, or the act of standing.—DUNSTER.

[n] *Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades*
With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of the Hesperides.

The poet perhaps specifies these beautiful attendants, as more eminently possessing the power of beguiling the heart: the "nymphs of Diana's train," on account of their remarkable beauty; see Odyss. vi. 110: the "Naiades," as having been companions of the enchantress Circe; see 'Comus,' ver. 254; and the "ladies of the Hesperides," by their skill in singing. See notes on 'Comus,' v. 981. Compare also P. Fletcher's "Purp. Isl." 1613, c. x. st. 30:—

Choice nymph, the crown of chaste Diana's train,
Thou beautie's lilie, &c.—TODD.

The story of Amalthea's horn, strictly so called, is given by Ovid, "Fast." v. 115, &c.: but in the beginning of the ninth book of the "Metamorphoses," a different history of a cornucopia is given, which seems to be more immediately referred to in this passage of the 'Paradise Regained':—

Nec satis id fuerat; rigidum fera dextera cornu
Dum tenet, infregit, truncaque a fronte revellit.
Naiades hoc, pomis et odoro flore repletum,
Sacrarunt; divesque meo bona Copia cornu est.—DUNSTER.

[o] *Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabled since.*

Some readers may perhaps, in this passage, think our author a little too fond of showing his great reading; a fault of which he is indeed sometimes guilty: but those who are conversant in romance-writers, and know how lavish they are in the praises of their beauties, will, I doubt not, discover great propriety in this allusion.—THYER.

Whenever Milton takes any images from his favourite romances, he immediately rises, as here, into the most exquisite poetry, and seems to finish his lines with peculiar pleasure and art.—JOS. WARTON.

The reason of this seems to be, that here was more play for his imagination. The classical learning was not so imaginative as the gothic and romantic.

[p] *Faery damsels, met in forest wide*
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.

Sir Lancelot, Pelleas, and Pellenore (the latter by the title of King Pellenore), are

And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings, or charming pipes[q]; and winds

persons in the old romance of "Morte d'Arthur, or The Lyf of King Arthur, of his noble knyghtes of the round table, and in thende the dolorus deth of them all; written originally in French, and translated into English by Sir Thomas Mallcory, Knt., printed by William Caxton, 1484."—From this old romance, Mr. Warton ("Observations on Spenser," sect. 2) shows that Spenser borrowed much. Sir Lancelot is there called of "Logris;" and Sir Tristram is named of "Lyones," under which title he appears also in the "Faery Queen." "Logris" is the same with *Loegria* (according to the more fabulous historians, and amongst them Milton), an old name for England. Holinshed calls it both *Loegria* and *Logiers*. See his "History of England," b. ii. 4, 5. The same author, in his "Description of Britain," instead of *Loegria*, or *Logiers*, writes it *Lhoegres*. The title of his 22nd chapter is, "after what manner the soveraigntie of this isle doth remaine to the princes of Lhoegres or kings of England." Spenser, in his "Faery Queen," where he gives the "Chronicle of the early Briton kings from Brute to Uther's reign," calls it *Logris*, II. x. 14:—

And Camber did possess the western quart,
Which Severn now from Logris doth depart.

Lyones was an old name for Cornwall, or at least for a part of that county. Camden, in his "Britannia," speaking of the Land's End, says, "The inhabitants are of opinion that this promontory did once reach farther to the west, which the seamen positively conclude from the rubbish they draw up. The neighbours will tell you too, from a certain old tradition, that the land there drowned by the incursions of the sea was called *Lionesse*." Sir Tristram of Lyones, or Lionesse, is well known to the readers of the old romances. In the French translation of the "Orlando Inamorato" of Boiardo, he is termed Tristan de Leonnois, although in the original he is only mentioned by the single name of Tristan. In the "Orlando Inamorato" also, among the knights, who defend Angelica in the fortress of Albracca against Agrican, is Sir Hubert of Lyones, Uberto dal Lione. Tristram, in his account of himself in the "Faery Queen," VI. ii. 28, says,

And Tristram is my name, the only heire
Of good king Meliogras, which did rayne
In Cornewale, till that he through lives despeire
Untimely dyde.

He then relates how his uncle seized upon the crown; whereupon his mother, conceiving great fears for her son's personal safety, determined to send him into "some foreign land,"

Out of the countrie wherein I was bred,
The which the fertile Lionesse is hight,
Into the land of Faerie.

These particulars, Mr. Warton shows, are drawn from the "Morte d'Arthur," where it is said "There was a knight Meliodas, and he was lord and king of the country of Lyones, and he wedded king Marke's sister of Cornewale." The issue of this marriage was Sir Tristram. These knights, he also observes, are there often represented as meeting beautiful damsels in desolate forests. Sir Pelleas, "a very valorous knight of Arthur's round table," is one of those who pursue the blatant beast, when, after having been conquered and chained up by Sir Calidore, it "broke its iron chain" and again "ranged through the world." "Faery Queen," VI. xii. 39.

Milton's later thoughts could not, we find, but rove at times, where, as he himself told us, "his younger feet wandered," when he "betook him among those lofty fables and romances, which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renowne over all Christendome." 'Apol. for Smectym.' p. 177, 'Prose Works,' ed. Amst. 1698.—DUNSTER.

[q] *And all the while harmonious airs were heard*
Of chiming strings, or charming pipes.

Thus in 'Paradse Lost,' b. xi. 558:—

the sound
Of instruments that made melodious chime.

And again, ver. 594, "charming symphonies." Spenser, as Mr. Calton observes, thus likewise uses the verb *to charm*, "Faery Queen," v. ix. 13.—

Like as the fouler, on his guileful pype,
Charmes to the birds full many a pleasant lay.

Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd
From their soft wings[r], and Flora's earliest smells.
Such was the splendour[s]; and the tempter now
His invitation earnestly renew'd:
  What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict
Defends the touching of these viands pure:
Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil[t];
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.

But Spenser has *to charm* frequently in this sense. Thus, in his "Colin Clout's come home again," of his shepherd's boy,

Charming his oaten pipe unto his peers:

And again, in the conclusion of his "October:"—

Here we our slender pipes may safely charme.—DUNSTER.

[r] *And winds*
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd
From their soft wings.

Mr. Thyer, who supposes this circumstance introduced in compliance with the Eastern custom of using perfumes at their entertainments, has noticed the similarity of the following lines, 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 156:—

Now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils.

He might also have cited a beautiful line from our author's early Elegy, 'In Adventum Veris;'

Cinnamea Zephyrus leve plaudit odorifer ala.

Milton, in the same Elegy, refers to the "Arabian odours;" and in the continuation of the passage from the 'Paradise Lost,' exhibited by Mr. Thyer, he speaks of the winds blowing

Sabæan odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the blest.—DUNSTER.

See likewise 'Paradise Lost,' b. viii. 515, &c. And compare Apoll. Rhod. "Argon." i. 1142; and particularly the following passage from Drayton, "Muses Eliz." 1630, p. 138:—

Where the soft windes did mutually embrace,
In the cool arbours Nature there had made;
Fanning their sweet breath gently in his face,
Through the calm cincture of his amorous shade.—TODD.

[s] *Such was the splendour.*

Virgil, describing the magnificent entertainment prepared by Dido for Æneas (Æn. i. 637), says,—

At domus interior regali splendida luxu
Instruitur;

on which La Cerda observes:—"Apte et signate splendida; nam splendor de conviviis sæpe;" and he cites from Athenæus, b. iii. Λαμπροτάτην δειπνοῦ παρασκευήν.—DUNSTER.

[t] *These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict*
Defends the touching of these viands pure:
Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil.

This sarcastical allusion to the Fall of Man, and to that particular command, by the transgression of which, being seduced by Satan, he fell, is finely in character of the speaker. Milton, in his 'Paradise Lost,' terms the forbidden fruit "the tree of interdicted knowledge;" and, in the eighth book, where Adam, relating to the angel what he remembered since his own creation, particularly recites the "rigid interdiction," ver. 323–335.—DUNSTER.

All these are spirits of air, and woods, and springs[u],
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord.
What doubt'st thou, Son of God? Sit down and eat.
  To whom thus Jesus temperately replied:—
Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?
And who withholds my power that right to use?
Shall I receive by gift, what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness[v],
And call swift flights of angels[w] ministrant
Array'd in glory on my cup to attend:
Why shouldst thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles[x].
  To whom thus answer'd Satan malcontent:
That I have also power to give, thou seest;
If of that power I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestow'd on whom I pleased,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why shouldst thou not accept it? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspect;
Of these things others quickly will dispose,

[u] *All these are spirits of air, and woods, and springs.*

These "spirits of air, and woods, and springs," remind us of Shakspeare's "elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves," in the "Tempest."—DUNSTER.

The whole of this passage is extraordinarily and exquisitely beautiful; the turn of the expression is in the highest degree persuasive and happy.

[v] *Command a table in this wilderness.*

From Psalm lxxviii. 19:—"They said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?"—RICHARDSON.

[w] *Flights of angels.*

An expression likewise in Shakspeare, "Hamlet," a. v. s. 6: "And flight of angels sing thee to thy rest."—NEWTON.

Compare St. Matthew xxvi. 53.—DUNSTER.

[x] *And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles.*

Not without a resemblance to Virgil, Æn. ii. 49.

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes;

and to a preceding part of the same speech of Laocoon:—

O miseri, quæ tanta insania, cives?
Creditis avectos hostes, aut ulla putatis
Dona carere dolis Danaum?

Dr. Newton observes, that, "thy gifts no gifts," is from Sophocles, "Ajax," v. 675.—DUNSTER.

Compare our author, in his 'Apology for Smectymnuus,' sect. xi.:—"Shall we receive our prayers at the bounty of our more wicked enemies, whose gifts are no gifts but the instruments of our bane?"—TODD.

Whose pains have earn'd the far-fet spoil. With that [y]
Both table and provision vanish'd quite
With sound [z] of harpies' wings and talons heard:
Only the importune [a] tempter still remain'd,
And with these words his temptation pursued:
By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not moved;
Thy temperance, invincible besides,
For no allurement yields to appetite;
And all thy heart is set on high designs,
High actions: but wherewith to be achieved?
Great acts require great means of enterprise:
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A carpenter thy father known, thyself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home;
Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit.
Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire
To greatness? whence authority derivest?
What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost [b]?
Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms [c]:

[y] *With that, &c.*

See the notes on 'Comus,' ver. 659.—TODD.

[z] *With sound, &c.*

The sound of the wings and talons is much finer than if the harpies had been seen; because the imagination is left at work, and the surprise is greater than if they had been mentioned before.—T. WARTON.

As this infernally magical banquet vanishes, the attendant spirits (see before, ver. 236), who had appeared in the scene as "tall stripling youths, nymphs of Diana's train, or ladies of the Hesperides," resume their proper infernal shapes. Milton, we may observe, characterises the furies as *harpy-footed*, 'Paradise Lost,' b. ii. 596.—DUNSTER.

The powerful brevity of this termination of the splendid array is very striking.

[a] *Importune.*

Spenser and our old poets write *impórtune*, thus accented; "Faer. Qu." I. xii. 16:—

And often blame thee to impórtune fate.—NEWTON.

[b] *Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude*
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?

The "dizzy multitude" is the *ventosa plebs* of the Roman poet, who speaks of them as to be gained in the same manner. Hor. Epist. I. xix. 37:—

Non ego ventosæ plebis suffragia venor
Impensis cœnarum.

See also Shakspeare, "Henry V." a. iv. s. 3:—

Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost.—DUNSTER.

[c] *Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms.*

Mammon, in the "Faery Queen," attempts the virtue of Sir Guyon with the same pretences, II. vii. 11:—

Vain-glorious elf, said he, dost thou not weet,
That money can thy wants at will supply?
Shields, steeds, and arms, and all things for thee meet,
It can purvey in twinkling of an eye:
And crowns and kingdoms to thee multiply.
Do I not kings create, and throw the crown
Sometimes to him that low in dust doth lie?
And him that reign'd into his room thrust down;
And whom I lust, do heap with glory and renown?—CALTON.

What raised Antipater the Edomite,
And his son Herod placed on Judah's throne[d]
(Thy throne), but gold, that got him puissant friends?
Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,
Get riches first[e], get wealth, and treasure heap,
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me:
Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand:
They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain[f];
While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want.
To whom thus Jesus patiently replied[g]:
Yet wealth, without these three, is impotent
To gain dominion, or to keep it gain'd.
Witness those ancient empires of the earth,
In highth of all their flowing wealth dissolved:
But men endued with these have oft attain'd
In lowest poverty to highest deeds;
Gideon, and Jephthah, and the shepherd lad[h],
Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat
So many ages, and shall yet regain
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.

[d] *What raised Antipater the Edomite,*
And his son Herod placed on Judah's throne.

This appears to be the fact from history. When Josephus introduces Antipater upon the stage, he speaks of him as abounding with great riches, "Antiq." lib. xiv. cap. 2. And his son Herod was declared king of Judea by the favour of Mark Antony, partly for the sake of the money which he promised to give him. Ibid, cap. xxvi.—NEWTON.

[e] *Get riches first, &c.*

Hor. Epist. I. i. 53:—

Quærenda pecunia primum est.—NEWTON.

[f] *Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand:*
They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain.

This temptation we owe to our author's invention, as Mr. Thyer observes, who adds, that "it is very happily contrived, as it gradually leads the reader on to the stronger ones in the following books." It affords also a fine opportunity of concluding this book with some reflections, the beauty of which Mr. Thyer has justly noted, on the insufficiency of riches and power to the happiness of mankind. The language here reminds us of Spenser, who puts a similar speech in the mouth of Mammon, "Faer. Qu." II. vii. 8. —DUNSTER.

[g] *To whom thus Jesus patiently replied.*

When our Saviour, a little before, refused to partake of the banquet to which Satan had invited him, the line ran thus, ver. 378:—

To whom thus Jesus *temperately* replied;

but now, when Satan has reproached him with his poverty and low circumstances, the word is fitly altered, and the verse runs thus:—

To whom thus Jesus *patiently* replied.—NEWTON.

[h] *Gideon, and Jephthah, and the shepherd lad.*

Our Saviour is rightly made to cite his first instances from Scripture, and of his own nation, as being the best known to him; but it is with great art that the poet also supposes him not to be unacquainted with heathen history, for the sake of introducing a greater variety of examples. Gideon saith of himself:—"O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house," Judges vi. 15. And Jephthah "was the son of an harlot," and his brethren "thrust him out, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house, for thou art the son of a strange woman," Judges xi. 1, 2. And the exaltation of David from a sheep-hook to a sceptre is very well known.—NEWTON.

Among the heathen (for throughout the world
To me is not unknown what hath been done
Worthy of memorial), canst thou not remember
Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus[i]?
For I esteem those names of men so poor,
Who could do mighty things[j], and could contemn
Riches, though offer'd from the hand of kings.
And what in me seems wanting, but that I
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?

[i] *Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?*

Quintius Cincinnatus was twice invited from following the plough, to be consul and dictator of Rome; and after he had subdued the enemy, when the senate would have enriched him with public lands and private contributions, he rejected all these offers, and retired again to his cottage and old course of life. Fabricius could not be bribed by all the large offers of king Pyrrhus to aid him in negotiating a peace with the Romans; and yet he lived and died so poor, that he was buried at the public expense, and his daughters' fortunes were paid out of the treasury. Curius Dentatus would not accept of the lands which the senate had assigned him for the reward of his victories; and when the ambassadors of the Samnites offered him a large sum of money as he was sitting at the fire and roasting turnips with his own hands, he nobly refused to take it; saying that it was his ambition not to be rich, but to command those who were so: and Regulus, after performing many great exploits, was taken prisoner by the Carthaginians, and sent with the ambassadors to Rome to treat of peace, upon oath to return to Carthage if no peace or exchange of prisoners should be agreed upon: but was himself the first to dissuade a peace; and chose to leave his country, family, friends, everything, and return a glorious captive to certain tortures and death, rather than suffer the senate to conclude a dishonourable treaty. Our Saviour cites these instances of noble Romans in order of time, as he did those of his own nation: and, as Mr. Calton observes, the Romans in the most degenerate times were fond of these, and some other like examples of ancient virtues; and their writers of all sorts delight to introduce them: but the greatest honour that poetry ever did them is here, by the praise of the Son of God.—NEWTON.

[j] *For I esteem those names of men so poor,*
Who could do mighty things, &c.

The author had here plainly Claudian in his mind, "De IV. Cons. Honor." 412:—

Discitur hinc quantum paupertas sobria possit:
Pauper erat Curius, cum reges vinceret armis;
Pauper Fabricius, Pyrrhi cum sperneret aurum;
Sordida Serranus flexit dictator aratra; &c.

And again, "In Rufinum," i. 200:—

Semper inops, quicunque cupit. Contentus honesto
Fabricius parvo spernebat munera regum,
Sudabatque gravi consul Serranus aratro,
Et casa pugnaces Curios angusta tegebat.
Hæc mihi paupertas opulentior.

It is probable that he remembered here some of his beloved republicans,—

those names of men so poor,
Who could do mighty things;

and it is possible that he might also think of himself, who

could contemn
Riches, though offer'd from the hand of kings;

if that story be true of his having been offered to be Latin secretary to Charles the Second, and of his refusing it.—NEWTON.

With the citation of "Riches, though offer'd from the hand of kings," compare Plutarch, "Life of Cicero:"—Καὶ δῶρα μὲν οὐδὲ τῶν βασιλέων διδόντων ἔλαβε.—DUNSTER.

Extol not riches then[k], the toil of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare; more apt
To slacken Virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise[l].
What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and realms? yet not, for that a crown,
Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights,
To him who wears the regal diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies;
For therein stands the office of a king,
His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,
That for the publick all this weight he bears[m].
Yet he, who reigns within himself[n], and rules

[k] *Extol not riches then, &c.*

Milton concludes this book, and our Saviour's reply to Satan, with a series of thoughts as noble and just, and as worthy of the speaker, as can possibly be imagined. I think one may venture to affirm, that, as the 'Paradise Regained' is a poem entirely moral and religious, the excellency of which does not consist so much in bold figures and strong images, as in deep and virtuous sentiments expressed with a becoming gravity, and a certain decent majesty; this is as true an instance of the sublime as the battles of the angels in the 'Paradise Lost.'—THYER.

This is an excellent note of Thyer, worthy to be always kept in remembrance.

[l] *The toil of fools,*
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare; more apt
To slacken Virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise

Thus Juvenal, Sat. vi. 297:—

Prima peregrinos obscœna pecunia mores
Intulit, et turpi fregerunt sæcula luxu
Divitiæ molles.

And see Spenser, "Faery Queen," II. vii. 12, 13.—DUNSTER.

[m] *For therein stands the office of a king,*
His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,
That for the publick all this weight he bears

Milton, in the height of his political ardour, declared that he was not actuated "by hatred to kings, but only to tyrants:" neither is there any occasion to question the truth of this assertion; but such was his apprehension of monarchical tyranny, that the current of his prejudices certainly ran very strongly in favour of a republican government. Even in one of his latest political publications, 'The ready and easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth,' he professes, that "though there may be such a king, who may regard the common good before his own, yet this rarely happens in a monarchy not elective;" and, on this ground, he strongly remonstrates against the risk of admitting kingship. The contest however was now completely over; and our author, having seen the fallacy, not only of his hopes, but also of his confidence in those persons, of whose consummate hypocrisy his ardent integrity had been the dupe, seems, in thus sketching out the laborious duties of a good and patriotic prince, to be somewhat more reconciled to kingly government. About this time, also, seemingly under the same impression, he had proceeded in his history, and composed the fifth and sixth books, in which we find no marks of any splenetic dislike to kings: on the contrary, many of the characters of our early monarchs are drawn, not merely with an impartial hand, but often with a favourable one. The character of Alfred, in particular, is given with the most affectionate admiration; and is not without its resemblance to the compressed description of a good king in this place. See his 'History of England,' b. v.—DUNSTER.

[n] *Yet he, who reigns within himself, &c.*

Such sentiments are inculcated not only by the philosophers, but also by the poets; as Hor. Ode II. ii. 9:—

Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king;
Which every wise and virtuous man attains;
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,
Subject himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him, which he serves[o].
But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from errour lead,
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly[p]; this attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part:
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force; which to a generous mind,
So reigning, can be no sincere delight[q].
Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done[r], and to lay down

Latius regnes avidum domando
Spiritum, &c.

and see Sat. II. vii. 83.—NEWTON.

The 'Paradise Regained,' Mr. Hayley very justly observes, "is a poem that particularly deserves to be recommended to ardent and ingenuous youth; as it is admirably calculated to inspire that spirit of self-command, which is, as Milton esteemed it, the truest heroism, and the triumph of Christianity." Life of Milton, p. 126.—DUNSTER.

[o] *Subject himself to anarchy within,*
Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.

Palpably alluding to Charles the Second, and his dissolute manners. Compare 'Paradise Lost,' b. xii. 86, &c.—DUNSTER.

[p] *But to guide nations in the way of truth*
By saving doctrine, and from errour lead,
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly.

In this speech concerning riches and realms, our poet has culled all the choicest, finest flowers out of the heathen poets and philosophers who have written upon these subjects. It is not so much their words, as their substance sublimed and improved: but here he soars above them; and nothing could have given him so complete an idea of a divine teacher, as the life and character of our blessed Saviour.—NEWTON.

[q] *That other o'er the body only reigns,*
And oft by force; which to a generous mind,
So reigning, can be no sincere delight.

This is perfectly consonant to our Lord's early sentiments, as the poet describes him relating them in the first book of this poem, ver. 221, &c.—DUNSTER.

[r] *Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought*
Greater and nobler done, &c.

So Hephæstion to those who transferred the kingdom of Sidon from themselves to another; Quint. Curt. iv. 1.—"Vos quidem macti virtute, inquit, estote, qui primi intellexistis, quanto majus esset regnum fastidire quam accipere," &c. Dioclesian, Charles V., and others, who have resigned the crown, were perhaps in our author's thought, upon this occasion: for, as Seneca says, Thyest. III. 529:—

Habere regnum, casus est; virtus, dare.—NEWTON.

Possibly Milton had here in his mind the famous Christina, queen of Sweden, who, after having reigned twenty-one years, resigned her crown to her cousin Charles Gustavus, when she was still a young woman, being only thirty years old. Our author had before paid her considerable compliments. The verses under Cromwell's picture, sent to Christina, have been generally supposed to be his; though Mr. Warton inclines to think they were written by Andrew Marvel; and adds, that he suspects "Milton's

Far more magnanimous, than to assume [s].
Riches are needless then, both for themselves,

habit of facility in elegiac Latinity had long ago ceased." What ground he had for this suspicion he does not specify, nor is it easy to conjecture. I should not willingly persuade myself that our author could soon lose any faculty which he had acquired. Besides, these verses must have been written before the year 1654, when Christina abdicated; and only nine years before that, when he published a collection of his Latin and English poems in 1645, he had added to his seventh Elegy ten lines, which sufficiently show that he then perfectly retained his elegiac Latinity; and why it should be supposed entirely to cease in eight or nine years more, I cannot imagine. As Marvel was not his associate in the secretaryship till the year 1657, Milton has officially the best claim to them: it was also an employment, which, we may well suppose, he was fond of; as at this time he certainly thought highly of Christina, and was particularly flattered with the idea, that, on reading his 'Defensio Populi,' she withdrew all her protection from his antagonist Salmasius, who was then resident at her court; and whom, it was then said, she dismissed with contempt, as a parasite and an advocate of tyranny. Accordingly, in his 'Defensio Secunda,' Milton honours her with a most splendid panegyric; and in appealing to her that he had no determined prejudices against kings, nor any wish wantonly to attack their rights, he particularly congratulates himself upon having a witness of his integrity *tam vere regiam*. The expression is sufficiently obvious and hackneyed in the flattery of royalty; but it is well worth observing, when it comes from one who so seldom sings in that strain. It may also be noticed here, as we trace a resemblance of it in some of the preceding lines; where our author, having said that in the laborious and disinterested discharge of magistracy consists the real and proper "office of a king," proceeds to ascribe a superior degree of royalty, of the most distinguished eminence, to him who is duly practised in the habit of self-command;

Yet he, who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king;

and still more to him who conscientiously labours for the well-doing and well-being of mankind at large, by the zealous propagation of truth and pure unadulterated religion;

But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from errour lead,
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly.

Milton, it appears, however, was rather unfortunate in his selection of a favourite from among the crowned heads of his time. Mr. Warton, in his note on the 'Verses to Christina,' collects many curious anecdotes of her improprieties and absurdities; and Harte, the English historian of Gustavus Adolphus, terms her "an unaccountable woman; reading much, yet not extremely learned; a collector and critic in the fine arts, but collecting without judgment, and forming conclusions without taste; affecting pomp, and rendering herself a beggar; fond to receive servile dependence, yet divesting herself of the means; paying court to the most serious Christians, and making profession of little less than atheism." But our author saw only the bright side of her character; and considered her as a learned, pious, patriotic, disinterested princess.—DUNSTER.

See farther information, drawn from indisputable authority, relating to the extraordinary Christina, in my note on the poet's verses to her.—TODD.

[s] *And to lay down*
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.

We may rather trace Milton here to Macrobius, than to the passage cited in a preceding note from Q. Curtius by Dr. Newton:—"Quid? quod duas virtutes, quæ inter nobiles quoque unice claræ sunt, in uno video fuisse mancipio; imperium regendi peritiam, et imperium contemnendi magnanimitatem. Anaxilaus enim Messenius, qui Messanam in Sicilia condidit, fuit Rheginorum tyrannus. Is, cum parvos relinqueret liberos, Micitho servo suo commendasse contentus est: is tutelam sancte gessit; imperiumque tam clementer obtinuit, ut Rhegini a servo regi non dedignarentur. Perductus deinde in ætatem pueris et bona et imperium tradidit. Ipse parvo viatico sumpto profectus est; et Olympiæ cum summa tranquillitate consenuit." Saturnal. i. 11.—DUNSTER.

And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a sceptre[t], oftest better miss'd.

[t] *To gain a sceptre.*

Dunster gives the following closing summary of this book:—Our Saviour's passing the night is well described. The coming on of morn is a beautiful counterpart of "night coming on in the desert," which so finely closed the preceding book. Our Lord's waking—his viewing the country—and the description of the "pleasant grove," which is to be the scene of the banquet—are all set off with every grace that poetry can give. The appearance of Satan, varied from his first disguise, as he has now quite another part to act, is perfectly well imagined; and his speech, referring to Scripture examples of persons miraculously fed in desert places, is truly artful and in character; as is his second sycophantic address, where, having acknowledged our Lord's right to all created things, he adds:—

Behold,
Nature ashamed, or, better to express,
Troubled that thou shouldst hunger, hath purvey'd
From all the elements her choicest store,
To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord,
With honour.

The banquet, ver. 340, comprises everything that Roman luxury, Eastern magnificence, mythological fable, or poetic fancy can supply; and if compared with similar descriptions in the Italian poets, will be found much superior to them. In the concluding part of his invitation, the virulence of the arch-fiend breaks out, as it were involuntarily, in a sarcastic allusion to the divine prohibition respecting the tree of knowledge; but he immediately resumes his hypocritical servility, which much resembles his language in the ninth book of the 'Paradise Lost,' when, in his addresses to Eve, "persuasive rhetorick sleek'd his tongue." The last three lines are quite in this style:—

All these are spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord.

Our Lord's reply is truly sublime:—

I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in the wilderness,
And call swift flights of angels ministrant,
Array'd in glory, on my cup to attend.

This part of the book, in particular, is so highly finished, that I could wish it had concluded, as it might well have done, with the vanishing of the banquet. The present conclusion, from its subject, required another style of poetry; it has little description, no machinery, and no mythological allusions to elevate and adorn it; but it is not without a sublimity of another kind. Satan's speech, in which he assails our Lord with the temptation of riches as the means of acquiring greatness, is in a noble tone of dramatic dialogue, and the reply of our Saviour, where he rejects the offer, contains a series of the finest moral precepts, expressed in that plain majestic language, which, in many parts of didactic poetry, is the most becoming *vestitus orationis*. Still it must be acknowledged, that all this is much lost and obscured by the radiance and enriched descriptions of the preceding three hundred lines. These had been particularly relieved, and their beauty had been rendered more eminently conspicuous, from the studied equality and scriptural plainness of the exordium of this book; which has the effect ascribed by Cicero to the subordinate and less shining parts of any writing, "quo magis id, quod erit illuminatum, extare atque eminere videatur."—De Orator. iii. 101, ed. Proust. But the conclusion of this book, though excellent in its kind, unfortunately, from its loco-position, appears to considerable disadvantage. Writers of didactic poetry, to secure the continuance of their reader's attention, must be careful not only to diversify, but as much as possible gradually to elevate, their strain. Accordingly, they generally open their several divisions with their dryer precepts, proceed then to more pleasing illustrations, and are particularly studious to close each book with some description, or episode, of the most embellished and attractive kind.

BOOK III.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE third book of the 'Paradise Regained' continues to be argumentative: but Satan, having found himself hitherto foiled, begins by the most wily and flattering compliments. He now dwells upon the attractions and delights of worldly glory; and tells our Saviour how he is fitted to attain it above all other beings, both by counsel and action; and that it is his duty not to throw away his gifts, and pass his life in obscurity: he says, that men, at a more youthful age than his, have conquered the world. Our Saviour replies calmly:—

> Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
> For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
> For glory's sake by all thy argument.
> For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
> The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd?

He then describes what is true glory; and instances Job, who was more famous in heaven than known on earth.

He next expatiates on the false glory of conquerors:—

> Till conquerour Death discovers them scarce men,
> Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
> Violent or shameful death* their due reward.

After Job, he next names Socrates; who, he says, lives now

> Equal in fame to proudest conquerours.

I must here draw the reader's notice to Thyer's observation, who praises "the author's great art, in weaving into the body of so short a work so many grand points of the Christian theology and morality." Jesus exclaims:—

> But why should man seek glory, who of his own
> Hath nothing; and to whom nothing belongs,
> But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?

Satan, not silenced, takes up another ground: he appeals to Christ's duty to free his country from heathen servitude. Our Saviour answers that this must be done in the Almighty's time, and by the Almighty's means; but demands of Satan, why he should be anxious for his rise, when it would be his own fall.

Satan's cunning reply is one of the finest of all that Milton has invented of him. Then it was that he took Christ to a high mountain, to show him the monarchies of the earth. The description of the prospect at the foot of the mountain is in the richest style of picturesque poetry: he now points out the Assyrian empire.

After going through an immense Geographical view, conducted with wonderful art, skill, and learning, and everywhere discriminated by the happiest epithets;—Satan says,

> All these the Parthian (now some ages past,
> By great Arsaces led, who founded first
> That empire) under his dominion holds,
> From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.

Then comes a most magnificent picture of great armies going out to battle. This is done, to show our Saviour the necessity of worldly power, and numerous military

* Here is a little carelessness in this repetition of the word "death."



THE TEMPTATION ON THE PINNACLE.

preparations, to enable him to fulfil the duties for which he supposes him to be sent on earth;—the recovery of the throne of David. For this end he offers to secure for him the Parthian alliance.

Our Saviour, in answer, speaks with scorn "of the cumbersome luggage of war;" and at the same time reproaches Satan with the insidiousness of his pretended zeal for the welfare of Israel, or David, or his throne, when he had hitherto proved their greatest enemy.

Of the poetry of this character it is scarcely necessary to urge the exalted merits. Imagination exerts itself in various tracks, and various forms: here it executes its duty in filling up the outlines of a divine story;—that is, a story of inspired wisdom,—of holiest virtue,—of superiority to all worldly temptations,—of patient suffering,—of faith in the Supreme Being,—of examples of the punishment of the wicked,—and of the inappeasable malice of Satan. It is necessarily therefore more intellectual, spiritual, and didactic, in every part, than material: and yet it is so intermixed with a due portion of imagery, that the fertility of a rich poetical genius pervades the whole poem.

Mind is of more value than matter: it is the soul which belongs to the image, rather than the image itself, which is the gem: thought, opinion, conclusion, the impression of the heart,—these are what instruct us, and elevate our nature. Of these, what poem is so full as 'Paradise Regained?' Its mere learning is miraculous; but that is of comparatively less interest. Yet the more enlarged is the author's experience, the wider the field whence he derives his deductions and convictions, the more numerous the eminent minds by whose wisdom he is aided, the richer and more sure must be the intellectual fruits at which he arrives.

Milton is so familiar with the ancient classics, that he perpetually falls, not only into a concurrence of observation and sympathy of feeling, but into their very expressions: yet not as if it was borrowed, but as if it was simultaneous: its freshness and its force prove its originality.

Our Saviour's answer to Satan, in assertion of the vanity of human glory, astonishes by its vigour of thought and blaze of eloquence. It is like the beams of the cheering sun let in upon a billowy and blinding mist: the understanding ratifies it; the conscience hails it. That no doctrine can be more pure, more noble, more sound, more useful than this, will scarcely be denied: its poetical character depends upon its loftiness, which also is of the most decisive kind.

The poetry of mere style, the artifices of language, are nothing: great thoughts and great images will support themselves. The necessity of illustration proves that the primary idea or image is dark, or weak, or trifling. Grandeur or beauty wants no dress: metaphorical phrases are often corrupt; and similes are generally superfluous and impertinent: yet these are taken to be the essence of modern poetry. I mention this, because the mere reader of the productions of our own times is apt to suppose Milton prosaic, when his strains are of the most poetical tone; because his style is simple and pure. The finest passages in our Saviour's exposition of the nothingness of human glory, are the plainest: till poets learn this, they will be but frivolous and gaudy pretenders. Whoever *thinks* magnificently, scorns the aid of flowers and spangles.

If we could bring back poetry, even in mere style, to what it was in the times of Spenser, and Shakspeare, and Milton, we should indeed be gaining an immense benefit to the world of English readers, and redeeming the splendour of the Muse's name and office. The unmeaning gaudiness, the gilded inanity of the greater part of modern verses, has turned the public taste for poetical composition into loathing. Let the reader study Milton's energetic thought and chaste manner day and night; and if at first any factitious taste may render it more a duty than a pleasure, his diseased habit will soon amend itself, and be changed to simplicity and purity. Then he will find his momentary delight followed by no satiety; but the wholesome food strengthen his mind, and grow with his growth. If the 'Paradise Regained' does not please him, let him be sure that he has much to amend in his intellectual qualifications.

ARGUMENT.

SATAN, in a speech of much flattering commendation, endeavours to awaken in Jesus a passion for glory, by particularizing various instances of conquests achieved, and great actions performed, by persons at an early period of life. Our Lord replies, by showing the vanity of worldly fame, and the improper means by which it is generally attained; and contrasts with it the true glory of religious patience and virtuous wisdom, as exemplified in the character of Job. Satan justifies the love of glory from the example of God himself, who requires it from all his creatures. Jesus detects the fallacy of this argument, by showing that, as goodness is the true ground on which glory is due to the great Creator of all things, sinful man can have no right whatever to it.—Satan then urges our Lord respecting his claim to the throne of David; he tells him, that the kingdom of Judea, being at that time a province of Rome, cannot be got possession of without much personal exertion on his part, and presses him to lose no time in beginning to reign. Jesus refers him to the time allotted for this, as for all other things; and, after intimating somewhat respecting his own previous sufferings, asks Satan, why he should be so solicitous for the exaltation of one, whose rising was destined to be his fall. Satan replies, that his own desperate state, by excluding all hope, leaves little room for fear; and that, as his own punishment was equally doomed, he is not interested in preventing the reign of one, from whose apparent benevolence he might rather hope for some interference in his favour.—Satan still pursues his former incitements; and supposing that the seeming reluctance of Jesus to be thus advanced might arise from his being unacquainted with the world and its glories, conveys him to the summit of a high mountain, and from thence shows him most of the kingdoms of Asia, particularly pointing out to his notice some extraordinary military preparations of the Parthians, to resist the incursions of the Scythians. He then informs our Lord, that he showed him this purposely, that he might see how necessary military exertions are to retain the possession of kingdoms, as well as to subdue them at first; and advises him to consider how impossible it was to maintain Judea against two such powerful neighbours as the Romans and Parthians, and how necessary it would be to form an alliance with one or other of them. At the same time, he recommends, and engages to secure to him, that of the Parthians; and tells him that by this means his power will be defended from anything that Rome or Cæsar might attempt against it, and that he will be able to extend his glory wide, and especially to accomplish what was particularly necessary to make the throne of Judea really the throne of David, the deliverance and restoration of the ten tribes, still in a state of captivity. Jesus, having briefly noticed the vanity of military efforts and the weakness of the arm of flesh, says, that when the time comes for ascending his allotted throne, he shall not be slack: he remarks on Satan's extraordinary zeal for the deliverance of the Israelites, to whom he had always showed himself an enemy; and declares their servitude to be the consequence of their idolatry; but adds, that at a future time it may perhaps please God to recall them, and restore them to their liberty and native land.

So spake the Son of God; and Satan stood
Awhile, as mute, confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted, and convinced
Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift:
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renew'd him thus accosts[a]:—
I see thou know'st[b] what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
Thy actions to thy words accord; thy words

[a] *Him thus accosts.*

I consider the opening of this book, with the arguments in favour of worldly glory, and especially our Saviour's answer, to be the finest of the whole poem; notwithstanding that it comes under the classes of character, and sentiment, and language, rather than of story. Its sublime distinctions, its exalted feelings, its magnificent plainness of style, fill one with a sort of glowing approbation, which seems to spiritualize and uplift our nature.

[b] *I see thou know'st.*

The extreme brevity and simplicity, yet noble climax, of this and the four following lines, is admirable.



The Temptation in the Garden

To thy large heart give utterance due; thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape[c].
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,
Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
On Aaron's breast; or tongue of seers old
Infallible[d]; or wert thou sought to deeds
That might require the array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such, that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms.
These godlike virtues wherefore dost thou hide,
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness? Wherefore deprive
All earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory; glory, the reward[e]
That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
Of most erected spirits[f], most temper'd pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,

[c] *Of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.*

Milton, no doubt, by the word "shape," intended to express the meaning of the Greek ἰδέα, but in my opinion it does not at all come up to it, and seems rather harsh and inelegant. There are words in all languages which cannot well be translated without losing much of their beauty, and even some of their meaning; of this sort I take the word "idea" to be. Tully renders it by the word "species" with as little success as Milton has done here by his English "shape."—THYER.

I should rather think it expressed from the *perfecta forma honestatis*, and the *forma ipsa honesti* of Cicero, "De Fin." ii. 15. "De Off." i. 5. And the more, because he renders *forma* by "shape" in the 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 848:—

Virtue in her shape how lovely.—NEWTON.

Milton was fond of this phrase.—TODD.

[d] *Or tongue of seers old*
Infallible.

The poet, by mentioning this after Urim and Thummim, seems to allude to the opinion of the Jews, that the Holy Spirit spake to the children of Israel during the tabernacle by Urim and Thummim, and under the first temple by the prophets. See Prideaux's "Connect." part i. book iii.—NEWTON.

[e] *Glory, the reward.*

Our Saviour having withstood the allurement of riches, Satan attacks him in the next place with the charms of glory. I have sometimes thought that Milton might possibly take the hint of thus connecting these two temptations from Spenser, who, in his second book of the "Faery Queen," representing the virtue of temperance under the character of Guyon, and leading him through various trials of his constancy, brings him to the house of riches, or "Mammon's delve," as he terms it; and immediately after to the palace of glory, which he describes, in his allegorical manner, under the figure of a beautiful woman called Philotime.—THYER.

[f] *The flame*
Of most erected spirits.

Silius Ital. vi. 332. "Erected spirits" is a classical phrase. "Magno animo et erecto est, nec unquam succumbit inimicis, nec fortunæ quidem," Cicero, "Pro Rege Deiotaro," 13. And Seneca, Epist. ix: "Ad hoc enim multis illi rebus opus est; ad illud, tantum animo sano et erecto, et despiciente fortunam."

It occurs likewise in 'Paradise Lost,' b. i. 679—

Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
From heaven.—DUNSTER.

All treasures and all gain esteem as dross[g],
And dignities and powers all but the highest?
Thy years[h] are ripe and over-ripe; the son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose[i]; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quell'd
The Pontick king, and in triumph had rode[j].
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
The more he grew in years, the more inflamed
With glory, wept that he had lived so long
Inglorious[k]: but thou yet art not too late.
To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied:—
Thou neither dost persuade me[l] to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
For glory's sake, by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,

[g] *Who all pleasures else despise,*
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross.

Thus Spenser, in the conclusion of his "Hymn of Heavenly Love."—

Seem dirt and dross in thy pure-sighted eye.

And Milton again, in his 'Verses on Time:'—

Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross.—DUNSTER.

[h] *Thy years, &c.*

Our Saviour's temptation was soon after his baptism; and he was baptized when he was "about thirty years of age," Luke iii. 23.—NEWTON.

[i] *At his dispose.*

Shakspeare writes "dispose" for disposal, "K. John," a. i. s. 3. "Needs must you lay your heart at his dispose."—DUNSTER.

[j] *Young Pompey quell'd*
The Pontick king, and in triumph had rode.

In this instance our author is not so exact as in the rest; for when Pompey was sent to command the war in Asia against Mithridates, king of Pontus, he was above forty, but had signalised himself by many extraordinary actions in his younger years, and had obtained the honour of two triumphs before that time.—NEWTON.

[k] *Wept that he had lived so long*
Inglorious.

Alluding to a story related of Julius Cæsar, that, one day reading the History of Alexander, he sat a great while very thoughtful, and at last burst into tears; and his friends wondering at the reason of it; "Do you not think," said he, "I have just cause to weep, when I consider that Alexander at my age had conquered so many nations, and I have all this time done nothing that is memorable?" See Plutarch's "Life of Cæsar."—NEWTON.

"Inglorious" here is Virgil's *inglorius*, i. e. insensible to the charms of glory, Georg. ii. 486:—

Rura mihi et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes;
Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius.—DUNSTER.

[l] *Thou neither dost persuade me, &c.*

How admirably does Milton in this speech expose the emptiness and uncertainty of a popular character; and found true glory upon its only basis, the approbation of the God of Truth!—THYER.

The people's praise[m], if always praise unmix'd?
And what the people but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar[n], and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?
They praise, and they admire, they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk,
Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise?
His lot who dares be singularly good[o].
The intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised[p].
This is true glory and renown[q]; when God,
Looking on the earth, with approbation marks
The just man[r], and divulges him through heaven
To all his angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises: thus he did to Job,
When to extend his fame through heaven and earth,
As thou to thy reproach mayst well remember,

[m] *The people's praise, &c.*

We may compare with this and some of the following lines the 31st stanza of Giles Fletcher's "Christ's Triumph over Death:"—

Frail multitude! whose giddy law is list,
And best applause is windy flattering,
Most like the breath of which it doth consist,
No sooner blown but as soon vanishing,
As much desired as little profiting,
That makes the men that have it oft as light
As those that give it.—DUNSTER.

[n] *And what the people but a herd confused,*
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, &c.

These lines are certainly no proof of a democratic disposition in our author.—DUNSTER.

[o] *His lot who dares be singularly good.*

Dr. Newton conjectures that Milton might here allude to himself, "who dared to be as singular in his opinions and in his conduct as any man whatever." But the language of the poet in this place is perhaps only classical, as it might well have been suggested by Horace, Ep. I. ii. 40:—

Sapere aude;
Incipe: vivendi recte qui prorogat horam,
Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis.—DUNSTER.

[p] *And glory scarce of few is raised.*

"Gloriam latius fusam intelligo; consensum enim multorum exigit. Quid intersit inter claritatem et gloriam dicam; gloria multorum judiciis constat, claritas bonorum." Senec. Epist. 102.—DUNSTER.

[q] *This is true glory and renown, &c.*

Here is a glory that is solid and substantial, "expressa," as Tully says, "non adumbrata;" and that will endure, when all the records and memorials of human pride are perished.—CALTON.

[r] *When God,*
Looking on the earth, with approbation marks
The just man.

"Ecce spectaculum dignum, ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo Deus!" Seneca, "De Providentia," 2. This celebrated passage of Seneca, the amiably affectionate biographer of Milton applies to the principles and the afflictions of our author. Hayley, "Life of Milton," p. 225.—DUNSTER.

He ask'd thee,—Hast thou seen my servant Job?
Famous he was in heaven, on earth less known;
Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame[s].
They err, who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide[t], to overrun
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault: what do these worthies,
But rob, and spoil[u], burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighbouring or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerours, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin[v] wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy;
Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers[w],
Worship'd with temple, priest, and sacrifice?
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other[x];
Till conquerour Death discover them scarce men,

[s] *Where glory is false glory, attributed*
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.

True glory, Tully says, is the praise of good men, the echo of virtue: but that ape of glory, the random injudicious applause of the multitude, is often bestowed upon the worst of actions. "Tusc. Disp." iii. 2. When Tully wrote his "Tusculan Disputations," Julius Cæsar had overturned the constitution of his country, and was then in the height of his power; and Pompey had lost his life in the same pursuit of glory.—CALTON.

[t] *They err, who count it glorious to subdue*
By conquest far and wide, &c.

Here might be an allusion intended to Louis XIV., who at this time began to disturb Europe; and whose vanity and ambition were gratified by titles, such as are here mentioned, from his numerous parasites. We may here compare 'Paradise Lost,' b. xi. 691, &c. And again, ver. 789, &c., of the same book.—DUNSTER.

[u] *What do these worthies,*
But rob, and spoil, &c.

Thus Drummond, in his "Shadow of the Judgment:"—

All live on earth by spoil:
Who most can ravage, rob, ransack, blaspheme,
Is held most virtuous, hath a worthy's name.

Milton's description of the ravages of conquerors may have been copied from some of the accounts of the barbarous nations that invaded Rome. Ovid describes the Getæ thus spoiling, robbing, slaying, enslaving, and burning, Trist. III. El. x. 55, &c.—DUNSTER.

[v] *Who leave behind*
Nothing but ruin.

Thus, Joel ii. 3: "The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness."—DUNSTER.

[w] *And must be titled gods,*
Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers.

The second Antiochus, king of Syria, was called Antiochus Θεός, or "the God." The Athenians gave Demetrius Poliorcetes, and his father Antigonus, the titles of Εὐεργέται, *benefactors;* and Σωτῆρες, *deliverers.*—CALTON.

[x] *One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other.*

Alexander is particularly intended by the one, and Romulus by the other; who, though better than Alexander, founded his empire in the blood of his brother, and for his overgrown tyranny was at last destroyed by his own senate.—NEWTON.

Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd[y],
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd,
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance[z]: I mention still
Him, whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,
Made famous in a land and times obscure:
Who names not now with honour patient Job?
Poor Socrates[a] (who next more memorable?)
By what he taught, and suffer'd for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now,
Equal in fame to proudest conquerours[b].

[y] *Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd.*

See 'Comus,' ver. 77. "To roll with pleasure in a sensual stye." Compare also 'Par. Lost,' b. xi. 516:—

> Themselves they vilified
> To serve ungovern'd appetite; and took
> His image whom they served, a brutish vice, &c.—TODD.

[z] *By patience, temperance*

In allusion to St. Peter's combination, 2 Pet. i. 6:—"Add to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience."—TODD.

[a] *Poor Socrates, &c.*

Milton here does not scruple, with Erasmus, to place Socrates in the foremost rank of saints; an opinion more amiable at least, and agreeable to that spirit of love which breathes in the Gospel, than the severe orthodoxy of those rigid textuaries who are unwilling to allow salvation to the moral virtues of the heathen.—THYER.

[b] *Equal in fame to proudest conquerours.*

Among the various beauties which adorn this truly divine poem, the most distinguishable and captivating feature of excellence is the character of Christ: this is so finely drawn, that we can scarcely forbear applying to it the language of Quintilian respecting the Olympian Jupiter of the famous sculptor Phidias; "cujus pulchritudo adjecisse aliquid etiam receptæ religioni videatur, adeo majestas operis Deum æquavit," l. xii. c. 10. It is observed by Mr. Hayley, that as in 'Paradise Lost' the poet seems to emulate the sublimity of Moses and the prophets, it appears to have been his wish in the 'Paradise Regained' to copy the sweetness and simplicity of the Evangelists. The great object of this second poem seems indeed to be the exemplification of true evangelical virtue, in the person and sentiments of our blessed Lord. From the beginning of the third book to ver. 363 of the next, practical Christianity, thus personified, is contrasted with the boasted pretensions of the heathen world, in its zenith of power, splendour, civilization, and knowledge; the several claims of which are fully stated, with much ornament of language and poetic decoration. After an exordium of flattering commendation addressed to our Lord, the tempter opens his progressive display of heathen excellence with an eulogy on glory (ver. 25), which is so intrinsically beautiful, that it may be questioned whether any Roman orator or poet ever so eloquently and concisely defended the ambition of heroism: the judgment of the author may also be noticed (ver. 31, &c.) in the selection of his heroes; two of whom, Alexander and Scipio, he has before introduced (b. ii. 166, 199), as examples of continency and self-denial: in short, the first speech of Satan opens the cause, for which he pleads, with all the art becoming his character. In our Lord's reply, the false glory of worldly fame is stated with energetic briefness, and is opposed by the true glory of obedience to the divine commands. The usual modes of acquiring glory in the heathen world, and the intolerable vanity and pride with which it was claimed and enjoyed, are next most forcibly depicted; and are finely contrasted with those means of acquiring honour and reputation, which are innocent and beneficial:—

> But if there be in glory aught of good,

Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
Aught suffer'd; if young African for fame
His wasted country freed from Punick rage [c];
The deed becomes unpraised, the man at least,
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek,
Oft not deserved? I seek not mine, but his
Who sent me; and thereby witness whence I am.
To whom the tempter murmuring thus replied:—
Think not so slight of glory [d]; therein least
Resembling thy great Father: he seeks glory,
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and governs; not content in heaven,
By all his angels glorified, requires
Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption:
Above all sacrifice or hallow'd gift,
Glory he requires, and glory he receives,

It may by means far different be attain'd,
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance.

These lines are marked with that peculiar species of beauty, which distinguishes Virgil's description of the amiable heroes of benevolence and peace, whom he places in Elysium, together with his blameless warriors, the virtuous defenders of their country, Æn. vi. 660–665.

In the conclusion of the speech an heroical character of another kind is opposed to the warlike heroes of antiquity;—one who, though a heathen, surpassed them all in true wisdom and true fortitude. Such indeed was the character of Socrates, such his reliance on Divine Providence, and his resignation thereto; that he seems to have imbibed his sentiments from a source "above the famed Castalian spring;" and while his demeanour eminently displays the peaceable, patient, Christian-like virtues, his language often approaches nearer than could be imagined to that of the holy penmen. The artful sophistry of the tempter's farther defence of glory, and our Lord's majestically plain confutation of his arguments in the clear explanation given of the true ground on which glory and honour are due to the great Creator of all things, and required by him,—are both admirable. The rest of the dialogue is well supported; and it is wound up with the best effect, in the concluding speech, where Satan offers a vindicatory explanation of his conduct, in which the dignity of the archangel (for, though "ruined," the Satan of Milton seldom "appears less than an archangel") is happily combined with the insinuating art and "sleek'd tongue" of this grand deceiver. The first nineteen lines are peculiarly illustrative of this double character: the transition that follows to the immediate temptation then going on, and which paves the way for the ensuing change of scene, is managed with the happiest address.—DUNSTER.

[c] *If young African for fame*
His wasted country freed from Punick rage.

This shows plainly that he had spoken before of the elder Scipio Africanus; for he only can be said with propriety to have "freed his wasted country from Punick rage," by transferring the war into Spain and Africa, after the ravages which Hannibal had committed in Italy during the second Punic war.—NEWTON.

[d] *Think not so slight of glory.*

There is nothing throughout the whole poem more expressive of the true character of the tempter than this reply: there is in it all the real falsehood of the father of lies, and the glozing subtlety of an insidious deceiver.—THYER.

Promiscuous from all nations [c], Jew or Greek,
Or barbarous, nor exception hath declared:
From us, his foes pronounced, glory he exacts.
To whom our Saviour fervently replied:
And reason; since his Word all things produced,
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to show forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul
Freely; of whom what could he less expect
Than glory and benediction, that is, thanks,
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense [f]
From them who could return him nothing else;
And, not returning that, would likeliest render
Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?
Hard recompense, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence!
But why should man seek glory, who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs,
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?
Who, for so many benefits received,
Turn'd recreant [g] to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoil'd:
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
That which to God alone of right belongs:
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance.
So spake the Son of God: and here again
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin; for he himself,
Insatiable of glory, had lost all:
Yet of another plea bethought him soon.
Of glory as thou wilt, said he, so deem;
Worth or not worth the seeking [h], let it pass.

[c] *Promiscuous from all nations.*

The poet puts here into the mouth of the devil the absurd notions of the apologists for paganism.—WARBURTON.

[f] *The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense.*

The same sentiment occurs in the 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 46:—

What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks?
How due!—NEWTON.

[g] *Recreant.*

See Spenser, "Faery Queen," II. vi. 28. "Thou recreant knight," to which Mr. Dunster refers; where Mr. Warton has observed that "recreant knight" is a term of romance. The phrase means not only one who yields himself to his enemy in single combat, but a coward and a traitor.—TODD.

[h] *Worth or not worth the seeking.*

In all the editions which I have seen, except the first, it is printed "Worth or not worth their seeking;" but, not knowing to whom "their" could refer, I imagined it should be "Worth or not worth *thy* seeking:" but the first edition exhibits this reading, "Worth or not worth *the* seeking," as Mr. Simpson proposed to read by conjecture.—NEWTON.

But to a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
To sit upon thy father David's throne,
By mother's side thy father; though thy right
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
Easily from possession won with arms:
Judea now and all the Promised Land,
Reduced a province under Roman yoke[i],
Obeys Tiberius; nor is always ruled
With temperate sway[j]: oft have they violated
The temple[k], oft the law, with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus: and think'st thou to regain
Thy right, by sitting still, or thus retiring?
So did not Maccabeus[l]: he indeed
Retired into the desert, but with arms;
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevail'd,
That by strong hand his family obtain'd,
Though priests, the crown, and David's throne usurp'd,
With Modin and her suburbs once content.
If kingdom move thee not[m], let move thee zeal
And duty; zeal and duty are not slow,
But on occasion's forelock watchful wait[n]:
They themselves rather are occasion best;
Zeal of thy father's house[o], duty to free

[i] *Reduced a province under Roman yoke.*

Judea was reduced to the form of a Roman province in the reign of Augustus, by Cyrenius, then governor of Syria.—NEWTON.

[j] *Nor is always ruled*
With temperate sway.

The Roman government indeed was not always the most temperate: at this time Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea; and, it appears from history, was a most corrupt and flagitious governor.—NEWTON.

[k] *Oft have they violated*
The temple, &c.

Pompey, with several of his officers, entered not only into the holy place, but also penetrated into the holy of holies, where none were permitted by the law to enter except the high priest alone, once in a year, on the great day of expiation. Antiochus Epiphanes had before been guilty of a similar profanation. See 2 Maccab. ch. v.—NEWTON.

[l] *So did not Maccabeus, &c.*

The tempter had noticed the profanation of the temple by the Romans, as well as that by Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria; and now he would infer, that Jesus was to blame for not vindicating his country against the one, as Judas Maccabeus had done against the other.—NEWTON.

[m] *If kingdom move thee not.*

"Kingdom" here, like *regnum* in Latin, signifies kingly state, the circumstances of regal power; or, as our author in his political works writes, kingship.—DUNSTER.

[n] *But on occasion's forelock watchful wait.*

Spenser personifies Occasion as an old hag, with a gray forelock, "Faer. Qu." II. iv. 4. Spenser likewise, Sonnet 70, gives Time the same forelock. Shakspeare, in his "Othello," has "to take the safest occasion by the front." The Greek and Latin poets also describe occasion, i. e. time or opportunity, with a forelock.—DUNSTER.

[o] *Zeal of thy father's house.*

Psalm lxix. 9:—"For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;" which passage is applied in the New Testament, John ii. 17, to the zeal of our Lord for the honour

Thy country from her heathen servitude.
So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign;
The happier reign, the sooner it begins:
Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?
To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd:
All things are best fulfill'd in their due time;
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said[p].
If of my reign Prophetick Writ hath told,
That it shall never end; so, when begin,
The Father in his purpose hath decreed;
He, in whose hand all times and seasons roll[q].
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse[r],
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
Well hath obey'd[s]; just trial, ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it thee, when I begin
My everlasting kingdom? Why art thou
Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition?
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall[t],
And my promotion will be thy destruction?
To whom the tempter, inly rack'd, replied:
Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace: what worse?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear[u]:

of his Father's house, where he drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple.—DUNSTER.

[p] *And time there is for all things, Truth hath said.*

Eccles. iii. 1.

[q] *He, in whose hand all times and seasons roll.*

Acts i. 7.

[r] *Be tried in humble state, and things adverse.*

Sil. Ital. iv. 605: "Explorant adversa viros."—DUNSTER.

[s] *Best reign, who first*
Well hath obey'd.

Here probably the author remembered Cicero:—"Qui bene imperat, paruerit aliquando necesse est; et qui modeste paret, videtur, qui aliquando imperet, dignus esse." "De Leg." iii. 2. The same sentiment occurs in Aristotle, "Polit." iii. 4, vii. 14; and in Plato, "De Leg." vi.—NEWTON.

[t] *Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall.*

Alluding to the rising and setting of opposite stars. Milton, in the first book of this poem, terms our Lord "our Morning-star, then in his rise."—DUNSTER.

[u] *For where no hope is left, is left no fear.*

Milton here, and in some of the following verses, plainly alludes to part of Satan's fine soliloquy, in the beginning of the fourth book of the 'Paradise Lost:'

So farewell, hope; and, with hope, farewell, fear!

If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst: worst is my port,
My harbour, and my ultimate repose:
The end I would attain, my final good.
My errour was my errour, and my crime
My crime; whatever, for itself condemn'd;
And will alike be punish'd, whether thou
Reign or reign not; though to that gentle brow
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect[v] and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire[w]
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of hell),
A shelter, and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud[x].
If I then to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
Happiest, both to thyself and all the world,
That thou, who worthiest art, shouldst be their king?
Perhaps thou linger'st, in deep thoughts detain'd
Of the enterprise so hazardous and high!

Farewell, remorse! All good to me is lost:
Evil, be thou my good!—THYER.

The reasoning of the tempter, in this passage, closely resembles that of Edgar, in "King Lear;" one of those tragedies, "though rare," which, in Milton's judgment, "ennobled hath the buskin'd stage."

Edgar thus comments upon his lot:—

To be worst,
The lowest, and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst,
Owes nothing to thy blasts.

[v] *From that placid aspect.*

Spenser, Shakspeare, and the poets of that time, I believe, uniformly wrote "aspéct," thus accented on the second syllable; as Milton has likewise always done in his 'Paradise Lost.'—DUNSTER.

[w] *Would stand between me and thy Father's ire.*

Milton, in his Ode 'On the Death of a fair Infant,' has a similar expression, st. x.; "To stand 'twixt us and our deserved smart."—DUNSTER.

In both instances the poet alludes to the Sacred Writings. See Numb. xvi. 48, Psalm cvi. 23, Wisdom of Sol. xviii. 23.—TODD.

[x] *A kind of shading cool*
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.

In the twenty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, as Mr. Dunster also observes, the prophet, addressing God, terms him "a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat:" and, in the next verse, the interposition of God is illustrated by the simile which the poet uses: "Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud."—TODD.

The whole of this passage, with the appeal to our Saviour's goodness, though meant as artful flattery, is in the highest degree beautiful, affecting, and eloquent. The simile with which it ends is exquisitely poetical.

No wonder; for, though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider,
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem [y], few days'
Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest insight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienced, will be ever
Timorous and loth, with novice modesty
(As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom [z]),
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous:
But I will bring thee [a] where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of the earth, their pomp and state;
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts
And regal mysteries; that thou mayst know
How best their opposition to withstand.
With that (such power was given him then), he took [b]
The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain [c], at whose verdant feet

[y] *And once a year Jerusalem.*

At the feast of the passover. Luke ii. 41.—NEWTON.

[z] *As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom.*

Saul. See 1 Sam. ix. 20, 21.—NEWTON.

[a] *But I will bring thee.*

The artifice of this turn is sublime.

[b] *He took.*

The poet now quits mere dialogue for that "union of the narrative and dramatic powers," which Dr. Johnson, speaking of this poem, observes, "must ever be more pleasing than a dialogue without action." The description of the "specular mount," where our Lord is placed to view at once the whole Parthian empire, at the same time that it is truly poetical, is so accurately given, that we are enabled to ascertain the exact part of Mount Taurus which the poet had in his mind. The geographical scene from ver. 268 to 292, is delineated with a precision that brings each place immediately before our eyes, and, as Dr. Newton remarks, far surpasses the prospect of the kingdoms of the world from "the mount of vision," in the eleventh book of the 'Paradise Lost.' The military expedition of the Parthians, from ver. 300 to 336, is a picture in the boldest and most masterly style. It is so perfectly unique in its kind, that I know not where in poetry, ancient or modern, to go for anything materially resembling it. The fifteenth book of Tasso's "Jerusalem," &c. (where the two Christian knights who are sent in search of Rinaldo see a great part of the habitable world, and are shown a numerous camp of their enemies), does not appear to have furnished a single idea to our author, either in his geographical or his military scene.—DUNSTER.

[c] *It was a mountain, &c.*

The part of Mount Taurus, which bounds Mesopotamia on the north, we learn from Strabo, was sometimes called simply Mount Taurus, and sometimes the Gordyæan mountains; in the middle of which, nearly above Nisibis, stood Mount Masius: but this

A spacious plain, outstretch'd in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant: from his side two rivers flow'd,

mountainous range does not contain the sources either of the Euphrates or Tigris; although from every part of it lesser contributory streams flow into each of these rivers. In the passage cited by Dr. Newton from Strabo, ῥέουσιν signifies only that the two rivers flow through, or amongst, these mountains; and not that they spring, or have their sources, in them. That such is here the sense of ῥέουσιν, appears from another passage of the same ancient geographer in this part of his work; where, having traced the course of Mount Taurus eastward to the Euphrates, he speaks of the continuity of these mountains being no farther interrupted than by the course of the river as it flows through the middle of them. Indeed Strabo is very particular in pointing out the original sources of these two rivers. The springs of the Tigris he fixes in the southern side of Mount Niphates, which is considerably north-east of Mount Masius and the Gordyæan mountains; and the prime source of the Euphrates he carries very far north, as Ptolemy had also done; and affirms that the springs of the two rivers are two thousand five hundred stadia, which is above four hundred miles, distant from each other. Possibly there is some error here; as Eustathius (on Dionysius, v. 985) says they are only one thousand five hundred stadia apart. As the mountains which constitute the head or northern boundary of Mesopotamia incline to the south, and are absolutely the most southern part of the whole ancient Taurus, the lower end of Mount Amanus alone excepted; they are justly described by Strabo, νοτιώτατον; and why Dr. Newton should give βορειότατον as an hypothetical emendation in a parenthesis, or why Xylander should render the passage "maxime ad septentriones accedens," I do not comprehend. Mount Masius, or any projecting elevation of that ridge, would have been no improper point for viewing a great part of this geographical scene. Milton might therefore, not without reason, be supposed to have followed Strabo, as cited by Dr. Newton: and indeed "from his side two rivers flow'd" seems almost an exact translation of ἐντεῦθεν οἱ ἀμφότεροι ῥέουσιν, &c. But still, all circumstances considered, I conceive this was not the exact spot which he had selected in his mind for his "specular mount." We must recollect that, at the conclusion of the third book of his 'Paradise Lost,' he makes Satan, in his way to Paradise, alight on the top of Mount Niphates; and, while he is there, it is said that Eden "in his view lay pleasant."

That he fixed upon Mount Niphates in that place for Satan to light upon, and from thence to survey Eden, was certainly owing to his considering it as the most elevated range of this part of Mount Taurus; and that it was so, he collected from Strabo; who, having traced the course of the mountain from the Euphrates eastward, or rather north-east; and having described the Gordyæan mountains as being higher than any parts which he had before considered; says, "from thence it rises still higher, and is distinguished by the name of Niphates." The object of the poet in this part of the 'Paradise Regained,' certainly was to select a point of Mount Taurus inclining to the south-east, but sufficiently central and elevated to command the Caspian Sea, Artaxata, and other places specified, that lay directly, or nearly, north. Mount Niphates most particularly suited his purpose, and will, I imagine, be found to agree perfectly with all his descriptions: it may be observed also that it rises immediately above Assyria, which is the first country showed to our Lord. As to what is said, that "from his side two rivers flow'd;" the sources of the Tigris, it is agreed, were in the southern side of this mountain; and several ancient authors have supposed the Euphrates and Tigris to spring from the same source. Sallust affirms this in a fragment preserved by Seneca: "Sallustius, auctor certissimus, asserit Tigrin et Euphratem uno fonte manare in Armenia, qui per diversa euntes longius dividantur, spatio medio relicto multorum millium; quæ tamen terra, quæ ab ipsis ambitur, Mesopotamia dicitur." Boethius likewise, "Cons. Philosoph." l. v., says positively,

Tigris et Euphrates uno se fonte resolvunt;

And Lucan, l. iii. 256:—

Quaque caput rapido tollit cum Tigride magnus
Euphrates, quos non diversis fontibus edit
Persis;

on which passage Grotius observes, that "non diversis" means "parum distantibus;" but adds, "vulgo tamen creditum unum habuisse fontem." It is also observable, that

The one winding, the other straight [d], and left between
Fair champain with less rivers intervein'd [e],
Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea [f]:
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine [g];
With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the hills;
Huge cities and high-tower'd [h], that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs; and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desert, fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain too the tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began:

one principal source of the Euphrates, according to Strabo, was in Mount Abus, at no considerable distance north of Mount Niphates. Neither has the prime source of this river been carried by other geographers so far north as Strabo and Ptolemy have inclined to place it. It may be further remarked, that the description of the poet in other respects points out Niphates as the "specular mount," in preference to Mount Masius, or any point of the Taurus between that mountain and the Euphrates; as in such a station, the verse describing the extent of the Assyrian empire,

As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,

seems highly improper, when the speaker was standing so near the very bank of the last river. Besides, had the spectators of this geographical scene been placed on Mount Masius, or any point of the mountains immediately at the head of Mesopotamia, the plain "at the feet of these mountains" would have been only Mesopotamia. But the poet positively distinguishes between Mesopotamia and his great plain, that lay at the foot of that vast range of Mount Taurus, of which Mount Niphates may be considered as the highest and most central point. The latter he describes "a spacious plain outstretch'd in circuit wide;" while the former he places between its two rivers, and terms it "fair champain with less rivers intervein'd."—DUNSTER.

[d] *The one winding, the other straight.*

Dr. Newton and Mr. Dunster observe, that Strabo describes the Euphrates passing through the country with a winding stream, lib. xi. p. 521; and hence it is called "vagus Euphrates" by Statius, and "flexuosus" by Martianus Capella. With the same accuracy, the Tigris is here termed straight, being described as swift in its course as an arrow: "Unde concitatur, a celeritate Tigris incipit vocari: ita appellant Medi sagittam," Plin. "Nat. Hist." lib. vi. c. 27.—TODD.

[e] *With less rivers intervein'd.*

Quintus Curtius, having spoken of the great fertility of the country between the Euphrates and the Tigris, adds,—"Causa fertilitatis est humor, qui ex utroque amne manat, toto fere solo propter venas aquarum resudante," l. v. c. 1.—DUNSTER.

[f] *Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea.*

Strabo describes these two rivers, after having encircled Mesopotamia, joining their streams near Babylon, and flowing into the Persian Gulf, l. xi. p. 521.—DUNSTER.

[g] *Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine.*

See 'Paradise Lost,' b. xii. 18, and Ovid. Amor. II. xvi. 19. Dr. Newton, conceiving this description of the fertility of the country to refer only or principally to Mesopotamia, cites a passage from Dionysius as copied here by Milton. Quintus Curtius likewise notices the peculiar fertility of the "fair champain" between the two rivers, l. v. 1: and Strabo terms Mesopotamia, "a country abounding in pastures and rich vegetation," l. xvi. p. 747. But the greater part of this "large prospect," at least of those countries which lay east of Mesopotamia as far as India, is well entitled to this description of fertility either considered figurative or literal: as both ancient and modern accounts combine to show.—DUNSTER.

[h] *Huge cities and high-tower'd.*

So also in the 'Allegro,' v. 117:—"Tower'd cities please us then."—THYER.

Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale[i],
Forest and field and flood, temples and towers,
Cut shorter many a league: here thou behold'st
Assyria, and her empire's ancient bounds[j],
Araxes and the Caspian lake; thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond: to south the Persian bay,
And, inaccessible[k], the Arabian drouth[l]:
Here Nineveh[m], of length within her wall

[i] *O'er hill and dale, &c.*

Milton, for the most part, is fond of the singular number in combination.—T. WARTON.

[j] *Here thou behold'st*
Assyria, and her empire's ancient bounds.

The situation of Mount Niphates, it has been already observed, was particularly adapted for this view. The poet here traces accurately the bounds of the Assyrian empire in its greatest extent; the river Araxes and the Caspian lake to the north; the river Indus to the east; the river Euphrates to the west, and "oft beyond" as far as the Mediterranean; and the Persian bay and the deserts of Arabia to the south.—DUNSTER.

[k] *Inaccessible.*

Solinus describes in a similar manner the most desert parts of Africa. Speaking of the boundaries of the province of Cyrene, he says, "A tergo barbarorum variæ nationes, et solitudo inaccessa," c. 30.—DUNSTER.

[l] *The Arabian drouth.*

This figure of speech is equally bold and of fine effect.

I cannot forbear inserting here a citation from a poet of our own country, contemporary with Milton, where a description of the "sandy desert" is given in the same bold style. I cite the passage more at large than is necessary, from an opinion that the whole of it must be acceptable to the reader of taste. It is taken from the "Address to the Deity," which concludes the poems of George Sandys, printed in 1638, under the title of "A Paraphrase on Divine Poems:"—

O, who hath tasted of thy clemency
In greater measure, or more oft, than I?
My grateful verse thy goodness shall display,
O thou that went'st alone in all my way,
To where the morning with perfumed wings
From the high mountains of Panchæa springs;
To that new-found-out world, where sober night
Takes from the Antipodes her silent flight;
To those dark seas, where horrid winter reigns,
And binds the stubborn floods in icy chains;
To Lybian wastes, whose thirst no showers assuage,
And where swoln Nilus cools the lion's rage.

Sandys was the translator of Ovid. Part of this volume of poems consists of a "Paraphrase of the Psalms;" which Mr. Warton justly terms admirable. There is also a "Paraphrase of the Book of Job," in so masterly a style, that it may be well doubted if any poet of the succeeding century has surpassed it in a similar attempt.—DUNSTER.

[m] *Here Nineveh, &c.*

This city was situated on the Tigris; "of length," i. e. of circuit, "within her wall, several days' journey:" according to Diodorus Siculus, lib. ii., its circuit was sixty of our miles; and in Jonah iii. 3, it is said to be "an exceeding great city of three days' journey," twenty miles being the common computation of a day's journey for a foot-traveller; "built by Ninus old," after whom the city is said to be called "Nineveh; of that first golden monarchy the seat," a capital city of the Assyrian empire, which the poet styles "golden monarchy," probably in allusion to the golden head of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the four empires; "and seat of Salmanassar," who in the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, carried the ten tribes captive into Assyria seven hundred and twenty-one years before Christ; so that it might now be properly called "a long captivity."—NEWTON.

Several days' journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden monarchy [n] the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns:
There Babylon [o], the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis,
His city [p], there thou seest, and Bactra there;
Ecbatana her structure vast there shows [q],
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;
There Susa by Choaspes [r], amber stream,
The drink of none but kings [s]; of later fame,

[n] *That first golden monarchy.*

"Golden" is here generally descriptive of the splendour of monarchy. See 'Paradise Lost,' b. ii. 4. "Golden" might also have a political reference to Milton's apprehensions of the great expenses of monarchy; with respect to which, in justifying his republican principles, he had said that "the trappings of a monarchy would set up an ordinary commonwealth."—DUNSTER.

[o] *There Babylon, &c.*

As Nineveh was situated on the river Tigris, so was Babylon on the Euphrates; "the wonder of all tongues," for it is reckoned among the seven wonders of the world.—NEWTON.

[p] *Persepolis,*
His city, &c.

The city of Cyrus; if not built by him, yet by him made the capital city of the Persian empire; "and Bactra there," the chief city of Bactriana, a province of Persia, famous for its fruitfulness; mentioned by Virgil, Georg. ii. 136.—NEWTON.

[q] *Ecbatana her structure vast there shows.*

Ancient historians speak of Ecbatana, the metropolis of Media, as a very large city.—NEWTON.

[r] *Susa by Choaspes.*

Susa, the Shushan of the Holy Scriptures, and the royal seat of the kings of Persia, who resided here in the winter and at Ecbatana in the summer, was situated on the river Choaspes, or Eulæus, or Ulai as it is called in Daniel; or rather on the confluence of these two rivers, which, meeting at Susa, form one great river, sometimes called by one name, and sometimes by the other.—NEWTON.

[s] *The drink of none but kings.*

If we examine it as an historical problem, whether the kings of Persia alone drank of the river Choaspes, we shall find great reason to determine it in the negative. We have for that opinion the silence of many authors, by whom we might have expected to have found it confirmed, had they known of any such custom. Herodotus, Strabo, Tibullus, Ausonius, Maximus Tyrius, Aristides, Plutarch, Pliny the Elder, Athenæus, Dionysius Periegetes, and Eustathius, have mentioned Choaspes or Eulæus, as the drink of the kings of Persia or Parthia, or have called it Βασιλικὸν ὕδωρ, *regia lympha*, but have not said that they alone drank of it. I say Choaspes or Eulæus, because some make them the same, and others counted them different rivers. The silence of Herodotus ought to be of great weight, because he is so particular in his account of the Persian affairs; and, next to his, the silence of Pliny, who had read so many authors, is considerable. Though it can hardly be expected that a negative should be proved any other way than from the silence of writers; yet it so happens, that Ælian, if his authority be admitted, affords us a full proof that the water of Choaspes might be drunk by the subjects of the kings of Persia:—"In the carriages which followed Xerxes, there were abundance of things which served only for pomp and ostentation; there was also the water of Choaspes. The army being oppressed with thirst in a desert place, and the carriages being not yet come up; it was pro-

Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands [t],
The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye, thou mayst behold.
All these the Parthian [u] (now some ages past,
By great Arsaces led, who founded first
That empire) under his dominion holds,
From the luxurious kings of Antioch [v] won.

claimed that if any one had of the water of Choaspes, he should give it Xerxes to drink. One was found who had a little, and that not sweet. Xerxes drank it, and accounted him who gave it him a benefactor, because he had perished with thirst if that little had not been found," Var. Hist. xii. 40. Mention is made indeed by Agathocles of a certain water, which none but Persian kings might drink; and if any other writers mention it, they take it from Agathocles. We find it in Athenæus: "Agathocles says that there is in Persia a water called golden; that it consists of seventy streams: that none drink of it except the king and his eldest son, and that if any person does, death is the punishment." It does not however appear, that the "golden water" and "Choaspes" were the same. Eustathius, having transcribed this passage from Agathocles, adds:—"Quære, whether the water of Choaspes, which the Persian king drank in his expeditions, was forbidden to all others under the same penalty," Eustathius in Homer. Iliad Υ. p. 1301, ed. Basil. It may be granted, and it is not at all improbable, that none besides the king might drink of that water of Choaspes, which was boiled and barrelled up for his use in his military expeditions. Solinus, indeed, who is a frivolous writer, says,—"Choaspes ita dulcis est, ut Persici reges, quamdiu intra ripas Persidis fluit, solis sibi ex eo pocula vindicarint." Milton, therefore, considered as a poet, with whose purpose the fabulous suited best, is by no means to be blamed for what he has advanced; as even the authority of Solinus is sufficient to justify him.—JORTIN.

[t] *Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands, &c.*

Cities of later date, "built by Emathian hands," that is Macedonian; by the successors of Alexander in Asia. "The great Seleucia," built near the river Tigris, by Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander's captains, and called "great" to distinguish it from others of the same name. Nisibis, another city upon the Tigris, called also Antiochia; "Antiochia, quam Nisibin vocant," Plin. vi. 16. Artaxata, the chief city of Armenia, seated upon the river Araxes: "juxta Araxem Artaxata," Plin. vi. 10. Teredon, a city near the Persian bay, below the confluence of Euphrates and Tigris: "Teredon infra confluentem Euphratis et Tigris," Plin. vi. 28. Ctesiphon, near Seleucia, the winter residence of the Parthian kings. Strabo, l. xvi. p. 743.—NEWTON.

[u] *All these the Parthian, &c.*

All these cities, which before belonged to the Seleucidæ or Syro-Macedonian princes, sometimes called "kings of Antioch," from their usual place of residence, were now under the dominion of the Parthians, whose empire was founded by Arsaces, who revolted from Antiochus Theus, according to Prideaux, two hundred and fifty years before Christ. This view of the Parthian empire is much more agreeably and poetically described than Adam's prospect of the kingdoms of the world from the mount of vision in the 'Paradise Lost,' xi. 385–411: but still the anachronism in this is worse than in the other: in the former, Adam is supposed to take a view of cities many years before they were built; and in the latter, our Saviour beholds cities, as Nineveh, Babylon, &c., in this flourishing condition many years after they were laid in ruins; but it was the design of the former vision to exhibit what was future, it was not the design of the latter to exhibit what was past.—NEWTON.

The immediate object of this temptation was to awaken ambition in our blessed Lord, by showing him "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," that is, the splendour of the great empires that had been, or still were in existence. Whatever anachronism therefore there may be in this place, it is surely not introduced uselessly and unnecessarily, as Dr. Newton insinuates.—DUNSTER.

[v] *The luxurious kings of Antioch.*

No particular luxury seems laid by history to the charge of Antiochus Theus; though

And just in time thou comest to have a view
Of his great power[w]; for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his host[x]
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
He marches now in haste[y]: see, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms[z],
Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit;
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel[a]:
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings.

it was the profligate conduct of Agathocles, or Andragoras, then governor of Parthia, under him, that incited the resentment of Arsaces, and was the cause of the revolt, and finally of the creation of the Parthian empire. See Prideaux, part ii. b. 2. Milton had probably here in his mind the descriptions given in history of the luxury and profligacy of Antiochus Epiphanes; whose abandoned conduct and dissipation was such, that instead of Epiphanes, or the Illustrious, which name he had assumed, he was generally known by that of Epimanes, or the Madman. See "Polyb. apud Athenæum," l. v.—DUNSTER.

[w] *And just in time thou comest to have a view*
Of his great power, &c.

Milton, considering, very probably, that a geographic description of kingdoms, however varied in the manner of expression and diversified with little circumstances, must soon grow tedious, has very judiciously thrown in this digressive picture of an army mustering for an expedition, which he has executed in a very masterly manner. The same conduct he has observed in the subsequent description of the Roman empire, by introducing into the scene prætors and proconsuls marching out of their provinces with troops, lictors, rods, and other ensigns of power; and ambassadors making their entrance into that imperial city from all parts of the world. There is great art and design in this contrivance of our author; and the more, as there is no appearance of any, so naturally are the parts connected.—THYER.

[x] *For now the Parthian king*
In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his host, &c.

Ctesiphon seems to have been the general place of rendezvous of the Parthian army, wherever their destination might be. Strabo says that the Parthian kings, who had before made Seleucia their winter residence, removed to Ctesiphon, because it was larger, and more calculated for considerable military preparations; and because they wished to save the inhabitants of Seleucia from the inconveniences of a numerous army in a place not sufficiently large to receive them.—DUNSTER.

[y] *To her aid*
He marches now in haste.

In the "Charon" of Lucian, Mercury, in a similar manner, shows, and describes to Charon, Cyrus marching on his expedition against Crœsus —DUNSTER.

[z] *Steel bows and shafts their arms.*

Catullus terms the Parthians "sagittiferosque Parthos," Ep., xi. and Dionysius distinguished them as "warlike, and armed with bows," Perieg. v. 1040.—DUNSTER.

[a] *Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit;*
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel.

Lucan notices the skill of the Parthians in discharging their arrows at their pursuers, while they fled from them, lib. i. 229, "missa Parthi post terga sagitta." Ovid refers to the same circumstance, "De Art. Amand." i. 209, &c.; and Virgil speaks of "Fidentemque fuga Parthum," Georg. iii. 39.—DUNSTER.

He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless [b]
The city gates out-pour'd [c], light-armed troops,
In coats of mail and military pride;
In mail their horses clad [d], yet fleet and strong,
Prauncing their riders bore, the flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound [e];
From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales [f];
From Atropatia and the neighbouring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven [g].
He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,
How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them shot

[b] *What numbers numberless.*

A manner of expression, though much censured in our author, very familiar with the Greek poets. Thus Lucretius, iii. 799, and x. 1053, "Innumero numero." And see Tasso, "Gier. Lib." c. xix. 121.—DUNSTER.

[c] *The city gates out-pour'd.*

So, in Virgil, Æn. xii. 121.—

Procedit legio Ausonidum, pilataque plenis
Agmina se fundunt portis, &c.—DUNSTER.

[d] *In coats of mail and military pride;*
In mail their horses clad, &c.

Plutarch, in his account of the defeat of Crassus, says that the Parthians, on a sudden throwing off the covering of their armour, seemed all on fire from the glittering brightness of their helmets and breastplates, which were made of Margian steel; and from the brass and iron trappings of their horses.—DUNSTER.

[e] *Of many provinces from bound to bound.*

He had before mentioned the principal cities of the Parthians, and he now recounts several of their provinces. Arachosia, near the river Indus, Strabo, l. xi. p. 516. Candaor, not *Gandaor*, as in some editions: I suppose the Candari, a people of India, mentioned by Pliny, l. vi. sect. 18. These were provinces to the east; and to the north Margiana and Hyrcania, Strabo, l. ii. p. 72; and Mount Caucasus, and Iberia, which is called "dark," as the country abounded with forests. See Tacitus, Annal. vi. 34.—NEWTON.

[f] *The Hyrcanian cliffs*
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales.

Shirvan and Daghestan, or "the country of rocks," are those provinces which Milton calls "the Hyrcanian cliffs of Caucasus," &c.—SIR W. JONES.

[g] *From Atropatia and the neighbouring plains*
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.

This description of the Parthian provinces moves nearly in a circle. It begins with Arachosia east; then advances northward to Margiana; and from thence, turning westward, proceeds to Hyrcania, Iberia, and the Atropatian or northern division of Media; here it turns again southward, and carries us to Adiabene, or the western part of Babylonia, which, as Dr. Newton observes, Strabo (l. xvi. p. 745) describes as a plain country: then, passing through part of Media, it concludes with Susiana, which extended southward to the Persian Gulf, called "Balsara's haven," from the port of Balsera, Bassorah, or Bussora.—DUNSTER.

To the west of Pars is the province of Khuzistan, which the Greeks called Susiana; it has no mountain in it, but consists wholly of large plains: it has part of Persian Irâk to the north, the gulf to the south; and it extends westward as far as the plains of Wâsset and the port of Basra; whence Milton says "the south of Susiana to Balsara's haven." But he makes a considerable mistake, in putting into the mouth of the tempter the name of a city which was not built till six hundred years after the temptation.—SIR W. JONES.

Sharp sleet of arrowy showers [h] against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight:
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown [i]:
Nor wanted clouds of foot [j], nor on each horn
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight [k],
Chariots, or elephants indorsed with towers [l]
Of archers; nor of labouring pioneers
A multitude, with spades and axes arm'd
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke [m]:
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And waggons, fraught with utensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieged Albracca [n], as romances tell,

[h] *Sharp sleet of arrowy showers.*

Mr. Richardson observes that this is not unlike Virgil's

fundunt simul undique tela
Crebra nivis ritu. Æn. xi. 610.—DUNSTER.

Gray has imitated this:—

Iron sleet of arrowy shower.

[i] *The field all iron cast a gleaming brown.*

Dr. Newton observes that this line greatly exceeds Fairfax's "Tasso," c. i. st. 64:

Embattailed in walls of iron brown;

and even a very fine passage in Virgil, which has certainly much resemblance to the "field all iron," Æn. xi. 601,

tum late ferreus hastis
Horret ager, campique armis sublimibus ardent.

But I have met with a passage more immediately parallel in Euripides, who literally describes his field "all brass," in the "Phœnissæ," ver. 298.—DUNSTER.

[j] *Clouds of foot.*

Mr. Dunster observes, that by horsemen Milton meant only skilled in the management of a horse, as every Parthian was; and by no means that they never engaged except on horseback: and by chivalry he means, as I have already remarked, the army in general, like the Italian *cavalleria*. See 'Par. Lost,' b. i. 307.—TODD.

[k] *Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight.*

Sallust, "Fragment." l. iv., speaks of "equites cataphracti ferrea omni specie." Similar to the cataphracts of the Romans were the κλιβανάριοι of the Persians; whom the author of the "Glossarium Nomicum" describes, ὁλοσίδηροι, "all in steel."—DUNSTER.

[l] *Elephants indorsed with towers.*

Ammianus Marcellinus speaks of elephants in the Persian army, l. 24. Pliny mentions them bearing towers with sixty soldiers on them, "turriti cum sexagenis propugnatoribus," viii. 7.—DUNSTER.

[m] *or overlay*
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke.

Alluding probably to Æschylus's description of Xerxes' bridge over the Hellespont, "Persæ," 71.—THYER.

[n] *Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,*
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieged Albracca, &c.

What Milton here alludes to, is related in Boiardo's "Orlando Inamorato," l. i. c. 10.—THYER.

The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex Angelica [o],
His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemain.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry:
At sight whereof the fiend yet more presumed,
And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd [p]:
  That thou mayst know I seek not to engage
Thy virtue, and not every way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety; hear, and mark,
To what end I have brought thee hither, and shown
All this fair sight: thy kingdom, though foretold
By prophet or by angel, unless thou
Endeavour as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain; prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means;
Without means used, what it predicts revokes.
But, say thou wert possess'd of David's throne,
By free consent of all, none opposite,
Samaritan or Jew; how couldst thou hope
Long to enjoy it, quiet and secure,
Between two such enclosing enemies,
Roman and Parthian? Therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own; the Parthian first
By my advice, as nearer and of late
Found able by invasion to annoy
Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,
Antigonus and old Hyrcanus, bound [q],

[o] *The fairest of her sex Angelica.*

This is that Angelica, who afterwards made her appearance in the same character in Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso," which was intended as a continuation of the story which Boiardo had begun. As Milton fetches his simile from a romance, he adopts the terms used by these writers, viz., "prowest" and "Paynim."—THYER.

"Prowest" is the superlative of "prow," from the old French *preux*, "valiant." —DUNSTER.

[p] *Thus his words renew'd.*

The speech of Satan (ver. 346), professing the purpose why he showed all this to Jesus, judiciously reverts to the immediate subject of the temptation; and by urging our Lord to avail himself of the Parthian power, that he might gain possession of David's throne, and free his countrymen from the Roman yoke, it applies to those patriotic feelings which he had expressed in the first book of this poem, where he declares that one of his earliest sentiments of virtue, "more than human," was marked with a wish "to rescue Israel from the Roman yoke." Our Lord's reply is close and pointed, and serves farther to unfold the character of our great pattern of every virtue.—DUNSTER.

[q] *And captive lead away her kings,*
Antigonus and old Hyrcanus, bound.

Here seems to be a slip of memory in our author. The Parthians, indeed, led Hyrcanus away captive to Seleucia, after his eyes were put out, and when he was past seventy years of age, so that he might well be called "old Hyrcanus," but instead of leading away Antigonus captive, they constituted him king of the Jews, and he was afterwards deprived of his kingdom by the Romans. See Josephus, Antiq. lib. xiv. cap. 13; "De Bel. Jud." lib. i. cap. 13. But it should be considered that Milton himself was old and blind; and composing from memory, he might fall into such a mistake, which may be pardoned among so many excellencies.—NEWTON.

Maugre the Roman: it shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose;
Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league:
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly re-install thee
In David's royal seat, his true successour,
Deliverance of thy brethren, those ten tribes,
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve,
In Habor, and among the Medes dispersed[r]:
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph[s], lost
Thus long from Israel, serving, as of old
Their fathers in the land of Egypt served,
This offer sets before thee to deliver.
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance; then, nor till then,
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
From Egypt to Euphrates[t], and beyond,
Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear.
  To whom our Saviour answer'd thus, unmoved:
Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm[u]
And fragile arms, much instrument of war,

Dr. Newton's observation on the mistake of our "old blind" poet, is here rather unfortunate; as he himself, with his eyes open, seems to have fallen into a considerable mistake in this note, by describing Hyrcanus as having his eyes put out, which does not appear to have been the case. His ears were cut off by his rival Antigonus (see Joseph. "Antiq. Jud." xiv. 13), to render him incapable, when maimed in person, of filling the office of high priest; but (l. xv. c. 6, sect. 14, where the various misfortunes that befell Hyrcanus are particularly recited) nothing is said of his eyes being put out.—DUNSTER.

[r] *Those ten tribes,*
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve,
In Habor, and among the Medes dispersed.

These were the ten tribes, whom Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, carried captive into Assyria, 2 Kings xviii. 11; which cities were now under the dominion of the Parthians.—NEWTON.

[s] *Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph.*

The ten captive tribes of the Israelites were those of Reuben, Simeon, Zebulon, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasses. Only eight of these were sons of Jacob; the two others were the sons of Joseph. I would suppose therefore that the poet meant to give it,

Eight sons of Jacob, two of Joseph lost.

Otherwise he must have included, in the ten sons of Jacob, both Levi and Joseph. The Levites, it is true, did not form a distinct tribe, nor had any possessions allotted them; but, being carried into captivity with the other tribes, amongst whom they were scattered, Levi might be referred to among the lost sons of Jacob. It seems, however, quite incorrect to refer to Joseph as the head of a tribe, when he was really merged in the tribes of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasses.—DUNSTER.

[t] *From Egypt to Euphrates.*

That is, the kingdom of Israel in its utmost extent; for thus the land was promised to Abraham, Gen. xv. 18; and the extent of Solomon's kingdom is thus described, 1 Kings iv. 21.—NEWTON.

[u] *Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm.*

"Fleshly arm" is scriptural:—2 Chron. xxxii. 8, and see Jer. xvii. 5.—DUNSTER.

Long in preparing[v], soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles, and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.
Means I must use, thou say'st; prediction else
Will unpredict[w], and fail me of the throne.
My time[x], I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off), is not yet come:
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politick maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shown me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength[y].
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those ten tribes,
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons.
But whence to thee this zeal? where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood'st up his tempter[z] to the pride
Of numbering Israel, which cost the lives
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days' pestilence? Such was thy zeal
To Israel then; the same that now to me!
As for those captive tribes[a], themselves were they

[v] *Much instrument of war,*
Long in preparing.

"Totius belli instrumento et apparatu," Ciceron. Academic. ii. 1.—DUNSTER.

[w] *Prediction else*
Will unpredict.

This refers to what the tempter had said before, ver. 354, where he had fallaciously applied the argument, that the requisite reliance on Divine Providence does not by any means countenance a supine negligence, and a dereliction of all personal exertions. Mr. Thyer censures the manner of speaking here, as too light and familiar for the dignity of the speaker; but it strikes me as censurable, not so much for the lightness as for the quaintness of the expression, and somewhat of that jingling play upon words, of which our author was certainly too fond. To "unpredict" is something like to "uncreate." See 'Par. Lost,' b. v. 895, and b. ix. 943.—DUNSTER.

[x] *My time, &c.*

John vii. 6.

[y] *Argument*
Of human weakness rather than of strength.

It is a proof of human weakness, as it shows that man is obliged to depend upon something extrinsical to himself, whether he would attack his enemy or defend himself. It alludes to the common observation, that nature has furnished all creatures with weapons of defence, except man. See Anacreon's Ode on this thought.—THYER.

[z] *When thou stood'st up his tempter, &c.*

Alluding to 1 Chron xxi. 1:—"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." Milton, we see, considers it not as the advice of any evil counsellor, as some understand the word Satan; but as the suggestion of the first author of evil: and he expresses it very properly by "the pride of numbering Israel;" for the best commentators suppose the nature of David's offence to consist in pride and vanity, in making flesh his arm, and confiding in the number of his people.—NEWTON.

Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
And all the idolatries of heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heathenish crimes;
Nor in the land of their captivity
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers; but so died
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain;
And God with idols in their worship join'd.
Should I of these the liberty regard,
Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreform'd,
Headlong would follow: and to their gods perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan [b]? No; let them serve

[a] *As for those captive tribes, &c.*

The captivity of the ten tribes was a punishment owing to their own idolatry and wickedness. See 2 Kings xvii. and the prophets in several places.—NEWTON.

[b] *Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,*
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreform'd,
Headlong would follow: and to their gods perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan?

There is some difficulty and obscurity in this passage; and several conjectures and emendations have been offered to clear it; but none, I think, entirely to satisfaction. Mr. Sympson would read "Headlong would fall off, and," &c., or "Headlong would fall," &c.; but Mr. Calton seems to come nearer the poet's meaning. Whom or what would they follow? says he. There wants an accusative case; and what must be understood to complete the sense can never be accounted for by an ellipsis, that any rules or use of language will justify. He therefore suspects by some accident a whole line may have been lost; and proposes one, which he says may serve at least for a commentary to explain the sense, if it cannot be allowed for an emendation:—

Their fathers in their old iniquities
Headlong would follow, &c.

Or is not the construction thus?—"Headlong would follow as to their ancient patrimony, and to their gods perhaps," &c.—NEWTON.

There is somewhat of obscurity here it must be allowed; but I conceive our author to have many passages that are more implicate. The sense seems to be this: "Who, if they were freed from that captivity, which was inflicted on them as a punishment for their disobedience, idolatry, and other vices, would return to take possession of their country, as something to which they were justly entitled, and of which they had been long unjustly deprived; without showing the least sense either of their former abandoned conduct, or of God's goodness in pardoning and restoring them. This change in their situation would produce none whatever in their conduct; but they would retain the same hardened hearts, and the same wicked dispositions as before, and most probably would betake themselves to their old idolatries and other abominations." The expression "headlong would follow" seems allusive to brute animals hurrying in a gregarious manner to any new and better pasture; and "headlong" might be particularly suggested by Sallust's description of irrational animals, "pecora, quæ natura prona, atque ventri obedientia finxit." If a correction of the text be thought necessary, I should prefer,

Who, freed as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreform'd,
Headlong would fall unto their gods, perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan ——

Their enemies[c], who serve idols with God.
Yet he at length (time to himself best known),
Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back, repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood[d],
While to their native land with joy they haste;
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
When to the Promised Land their fathers pass'd:
To his due time and providence I leave them.
So spake Israel's true King, and to the fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles[e].
So fares it, when with truth falsehood contends[f].

in recommendation of which it may be observed, that "fall to idols" is Miltonic; as it is said of Solomon, 'Paradise Lost,' b. i. 444, that his heart,

Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul.—DUNSTER.

Is there not some distant allusion here to the effect of the restoration of Charles II., whom and whose followers their misfortunes had not taught virtue and humility?

[c] *No; let them serve*
Their enemies, &c.

"Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours," Jer. v. 19.—DUNSTER.

[d] *And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood, &c.*

There are several prophecies of the restoration of Israel; but in saying that the Lord would "cleave the Assyrian flood," that is, the river Euphrates, at their return from Assyria, as he cleft the Red Sea and the river Jordan at their coming from Egypt, the poet seems particularly to allude to Rev. xvi. 12, and to Isa xi. 15, 16. —NEWTON.

[e] *And to the fiend*
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.

We may compare the passage of Vida, where Satan, in his speech to the devils in Pandemonium, relates how he had been foiled in the temptation of our blessed Lord, "Christiad." i. 198.—DUNSTER.

So in G. Fletcher's "Christ's Victory," the sorceress is thus foiled in the temptation of our Lord:—

But he her charms dispersed into wind,
And her of insolence admonished.—TODD.

[f] *So fares it, when with truth falsehood contends.*

The same objection still lies against the conclusion of this book, as against that of the preceding one;—by coming immediately after a part so highly finished, as the view of the Parthian power in all the splendour of a military expedition, it has not the effect it would otherwise have. It is, however, a necessary conclusion, and one that materially carries on the business of the poem. An essential test of its merit is, that however we might wish it shortened, it would scarcely have been possible to compress the matter it contains.—DUNSTER.

BOOK IV.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

DUNSTER observes, that great poems have generally fallen off, and grown languid, at the close; but that this is not the case with the 'Paradise Regained.' The greater part of this fourth book is still dialogue and argument; first in favour of the military power and splendid trophies of Rome; then of the intellectual eminence and spiritual charms of Athens: but it is accompanied by more of action; as the storm in the wilderness raised by Satan, which is one of the grandest descriptions in all poetry; and the carrying off our Saviour by force to the temple of Jerusalem, and placing him on the top of a pinnacle. This is the last trial, and here Satan gives himself up as completely overcome.

The dialogues are always supported with surprising knowledge and power on both sides, though of course with an overcoming superiority on the part of Christ. The reasonings or the pleadings on the part of Satan are often so plausible, that the reader is kept on the anxious stretch how they are to be answered; and feels an electric glow at the unexpected force with which the ready answer is supplied. This never allows these argumentative parts to languish, but keeps the mind in full exercise and constant emotion. It is true, that the learning is so immense, that few can, in the perusal, follow the allusions; but the epithets are so picturesque or striking, that they rouse the mind with a general and strong, though indefinable activity and pleasure: we feel a master-spirit instructing and overawing us, and we believe: we do not take it as the flourish of rhetoric, but acknowledge its sincerity and predominance of thought. A divine intelligence is enlightening us, on the grandeur of creation, on the mysteries of our being, and on the purposes, vanities, and delusions of this terrestrial world.

Perhaps it may be urged, that this may be useful doctrine, but not poetry. Poetry must represent truths through the medium of imagination. Are not Rome and Athens so delineated by Milton, that we have both lively imagery and accurate comments? We are taught to view them in their proper and undisguised characters.

Speaking of the wise men of Athens, and their different sects, the heathen philosophers, Milton says,

Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not; or, by delusion,
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However, many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome: who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superiour
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?),
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself;
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
As children gathering pebbles on the shore.

The praise of such a passage as this would be like an attempt to gild the sunbeam.

When Satan was thus silenced, in his attempt, to seduce our Saviour by the splendours of Athenian literature, there follows, at ver. 368, an outburst of tremendous force, beginning,

Since neither wealth nor honour, arms nor arts,

and continuing for twenty-five lines.

Satan, in a rage at his defeat, thus resorts to threats:—

> So saying, he took (for still he knew his power
> Not yet expired), and to the wilderness
> Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
> Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose, &c.

Then follows the frightful storm, when "either tropic began thunder, and both ends of heaven;" and the "winds rush'd abroad from the four hinges of the world." This is followed by a bright morning, which, Joseph Warton says, "exhibits some of the finest lines which Milton has written in all his poems." Yet perhaps the storm is still finer: the contrast between the two is enchanting and most glorious. This intermixture of the intellectual, the speculative, and the descriptive, makes the perfect charm, that renders poetry divine.

Man is nothing, but as his mind operates upon matter: and matter is nothing, but as it is associated in its effects upon mind. Mere description is but imperfect poetry: but the spell is not confined to what is said and thought; much depends upon the character whence it comes. Every word assigned by Milton to Satan belongs to his proper character: thus his outlet of ungovernable anger at being confuted, and his consequent threats and evil prophecies, succeed to his winning and profuse flatteries. The sudden turn is conceived and expressed with that power of imagination and sagacity which fills us with admiration. Satan seems to say in a taunt—"You refuse all my splendid offers; but I dare to hope that you can so little finally resist them, that I will now impose upon you the condition of falling down to worship me, or I will leave you to your fate." Thus the arch-fiend in his passion defeated himself at once: he now has recourse to bodily violence; and there also is finally foiled, and is obliged to leave the field, and give up the attempt, conquered and abased.

Thus the poet rises to the last: then break forth the hymns and songs of angels and archangels, to celebrate the victory of our Saviour; and thus the poem concludes. I do not think that it would have been advisable to carry this subject farther: it is a perfect whole in itself. Our Saviour's death and resurrection might have formed the subject of another poem.

It always seems to me injudicious to attempt to weigh the comparative excellence of two compositions of a different nature. Certainly, the 'Paradise Regained' does not allow scope for so much inventive imagination as the 'Paradise Lost.' Adam and Eve were human beings, and of them the holiest poet may create a thousand visions; but of Christ his contemplations are more controlled by awe.

As one of the most marked qualities of this poem is its extraordinary plainness of style, which many have deemed to be too prosaic; it is the more necessary to set this subject in its true light. This plainness is the result of the loftiness of the theme, and of the thoughts and images of which it consists: these support themselves, and require not to be elevated by language: the simplest words do best, provided they are not vulgar. Perhaps no one else would have undertaken so grand a topic; and if any one had, he would have failed: he would have failed by false effort, and extravagant bigness of phrase.

Still it is probable, that one of the causes why this poem has not been as popular as it ought, is this very plainness. The world cannot be brought to think that there is poetry where there is not gaudy language: and I am afraid that almost all secondary poets think the same, and are not misled merely by a desire to conform to the bad models which they observe to be the common taste.

Whoever is endowed with a particular power, will follow that power; he will not be restrained by attempting what he cannot do, and neglecting what he can; but this is only true of power which is quite original and decided; it is not true of any faculties which are feeble or imitative: even in the first case, the proposition is not without exceptions; there may be a meek and timid heart, with a great genius.

Bad critics, the advocates and defenders of that bad judgment in literature which the multitude are so apt to indulge, do sometimes nip genius in the bud, and warm nauseous and hurtful fruit into birth and maturity: it is of essential service therefore to give to excellence its due praise, and to endeavour to impress the people with those extraordinary merits to which they have been hitherto blind.

The mass of mankind cannot easily be brought to believe that one man has been

born with gifts so pre-eminent over others: they suspect therefore the worth of that superiority which is claimed for him. Dryden and Pope did not follow a different tract from Milton in obedience to the public taste, but in obedience to the nature of their own inborn faculties: neither in fable, thought, nor style, could they have ever followed Milton.

Of almost all poets but Milton, it may be said, as he himself says of the Athenians,—

> Remove their swelling epithets, thick laid
> As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
> Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,

will be found bare and fruitless; at least, it will seem so, when we compare it with the celestial feast of the mighty author of 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained.' With him we rise to the stern simplicity of inspired wisdom: he leaves us in no state of factitious heat, to fall again, like Icarus, after having mounted on false wings: we find breathed into us a calm fortitude; we expect sorrows, and wrongs, and dangers, and are prepared for them; we covet no inebriate visions, and thus expose ourselves to no blights on a diseased susceptibility. The elevation is sublime; yet by its sublimity gives us mastery to grapple with earth.

ARGUMENT.

SATAN, persisting in the temptation of our Lord, shows him Imperial Rome in its greatest pomp and splendour, as a power which he probably would prefer before that of the Parthians; and tells him that he might with the greatest ease expel Tiberius, restore the Romans to their liberty, and make himself master not only of the Roman empire, but, by so doing, of the whole world, and inclusively of the throne of David. Our Lord, in reply, expresses his contempt of grandeur and worldly power; notices the luxury, vanity, and profligacy of the Romans, declaring how little they merited to be restored to that liberty, which they had lost by their misconduct; and briefly refers to the greatness of his own future kingdom. Satan, now desperate, to enhance the value of his proffered gifts, professes that the only terms on which he will bestow them are our Saviour's falling down and worshipping him. Our Lord expresses a firm but temperate indignation at such a proposition, and rebukes the tempter by the title of "Satan for ever damn'd." Satan, abashed, attempts to justify himself: he then assumes a new ground of temptation; and proposing to Jesus the intellectual gratifications of wisdom and knowledge, points out to him the celebrated seat of ancient learning, Athens, its schools, and other various resorts of learned teachers and their disciples; accompanying the view with a highly-finished panegyric on the Grecian musicians, poets, orators, and philosophers of the different sects. Jesus replies, by showing the vanity and insufficiency of the boasted heathen philosophy; and prefers to the music, poetry, eloquence, and didactic policy of the Greeks, those of the inspired Hebrew writers. Satan, irritated at the failure of all his attempts, upbraids the indiscretion of our Saviour in rejecting his offers; and, having, in ridicule of his expected kingdom, foretold the sufferings that our Lord was to undergo, carries him back into the wilderness, and leaves him there. Night comes on: Satan raises a tremendous storm, and attempts farther to alarm Jesus with frightful dreams, and terrific threatening spectres; which however have no effect upon him. A calm, bright, beautiful morning succeeds to the horrors of the night. Satan again presents himself to our blessed Lord; and, from noticing the storm of the preceding night as pointed chiefly at him, takes occasion once more to insult him with an account of the sufferings which he was certainly to undergo. This only draws from our Lord a brief rebuke. Satan, now at the highth of his desperation, confesses that he had frequently watched Jesus from his birth, purposely to discover if he was the true Messiah; and, collecting from what passed at the river Jordan that he most probably was so, he had from that time more assiduously followed him, in hopes of gaining some advantage over him, which would most effectually prove that he was not really that Divine Person destined to be his "fatal enemy." In this he acknowledges that he has hitherto completely failed; but still determines to make one more trial of him. Accordingly, he conveys him to the temple at Jerusalem; and, placing him on a pointed eminence, requires him to prove his divinity either by standing there, or casting himself down with safety. Our Lord reproves the tempter, and at the same times manifests his own divinity by standing on this dangerous point. Satan, amazed and terrified, instantly falls; and repairs to his infernal compeers, to relate the bad success of his enterprise. Angels, in the meantime, convey our blessed Lord to a beautiful valley; and, while they minister to him a repast of celestial food, celebrate his victory in a triumphant hymn.

PERPLEX'D and troubled at his bad success
The tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetorick
That sleek'd his tongue[a], and won so much on Eve,
So little here, nay, lost: but Eve was Eve;
This far his over-match, who, self-deceived
And rash, beforehand had no better weigh'd
The strength he was to cope with, or his own:
But as a man[b], who had been matchless held
In cunning, over-reach'd where least he thought,
To salve his credit, and for very spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more;
Or as a swarm of flies[c] in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet moust is pour'd,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dash'd, the assault renew[d]
(Vain battery!), and in froth or bubbles end;
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.
He brought our Saviour to the western side

[a] *That sleek'd his tongue.*

So Quarles in his "Elegy on Dr. Wilson," st. iii.:—

No far-fetch'd metaphor shall smoothe or sleek
My ruffled strain.—DUNSTER.

[b] *But as a man, &c.*

It is the method of Homer to illustrate and adorn the same subject with several similitudes: our author here follows his example, and presents us with a string of similes together. This fecundity and variety of the two poets can never be sufficiently admired; but Milton, I think, has the advantage in this respect; that in Homer the lowest comparison is sometimes the last, whereas here they rise one upon another. The first has too much sameness with the subject that it would illustrate, and gives us no new ideas; the second is low, but it is the lowness of Homer, and at the same time is very natural; the third is free from the defects of the other two, and rises up to Milton's usual dignity and majesty. Mr. Thyer also observes, that Milton, as if conscious of the defects of his first two comparisons, rises in the third to his usual sublimity.—NEWTON.

[c] *Or as a swarm of flies, &c.*

This comparison, Dr. Jortin observes, is very just; and in the manner of Homer, Il. xvi. 641. See also Il. xvii. 570, &c. Mr. Thyer notices likewise the simile of the flies in the second book of the Iliad, 469.—DUNSTER.

[d] *Or surging waves against a solid rock,*
Though all to shivers dash'd, the assault renew.

There can be but one opinion respecting this simile. "It presents," says Mr. Thyer, "to the reader's mind an image, which not only fills and satisfies the imagination, but also perfectly expresses both the unmoved steadfastness of our Saviour, and the frustrated baffled attempts of Satan."—DUNSTER.

Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain[e], long, but in breadth not wide,
Wash'd by the southern sea; and, on the north,
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills,
That screen'd the fruits of the earth, and seats of men,
From cold Septentrion blasts; thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate[f]
On seven small hills[g], with palaces adorn'd,
Porches, and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues, and trophies, and triumphal arcs[h],
Gardens, and groves[i], presented to his eyes,
Above the highth of mountains interposed
(By what strange parallax, or optick skill
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass
Of telescope[j], were curious to inquire):
And now the tempter thus his silence broke:—

[e] *Another plain, &c.*

The learned reader need not be informed that the country here meant is Italy, which indeed is long but not broad, and is washed by the Mediterranean on the south, and screened by the Alps on the north, and divided in the midst by the river Tiber.—NEWTON.

The ridge of hills here does not mean the Alps, but the Apennines, which divide the south-west part of Italy from the north-west, and in which the river Tiber has its source. The plain, contained between these hills and the Mediterranean sea, consists of the old Etruria, Latium, and Campania; the two latter being divided from the former by the course of the Tiber.—DUNSTER.

[f] *With towers and temples proudly elevate, &c.*

Thus Spenser, in his "Ruins of Time," where Verulam, comparing herself with Rome, describes "the beauty of her buildings fair:"—

High towers, fair temples, goodly theatres,
Strong walls, rich porches, princely palaces,
Large streets, brave houses, sacred sepulchres,
Sure gates, sweet gardens, &c.—DUNSTER.

[g] *On seven small hills.*

Thus Virgil, Georg. ii. 535, speaking of Rome: "Septemque una sibi muro circumdedit arces."—NEWTON.

[h] *With palaces adorn'd,*
Porches, and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues, and trophies, and triumphal arcs.

All these articles of grandeur and expense, both public and private, are recorded and minutely illustrated, by Hakewill, in his "Apologie of the Power and Providence of God," through several sections of a chapter entitled, "Of the Romans excessiue luxurie in building."—TODD.

[i] *Gardens, and groves.*

The extravagance of the Romans in these articles of luxury was carried to a ridiculous height. They planted "gardens and orchards and groues vpon their house toppes; therein like Antipodes running a contrary course to nature, as Seneca truly and justly taxes them, Epist. 122." Hakewill's "Apologie," &c., in the chapter entitled, "Their [the Romans] prodigall sumptuousnesse in their private buildings, in regard of the largenesse and height of their houses, as also in regard of their marble pillars, walls, roofes, beames, and pauement full of art and cost," p. 404. Compare ver. 58, &c.—TODD.

[j] *By what strange parallax, or optick skill*
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass
Of telescope.

The learned have been very idly busy in contriving the manner in which Satan

The city, which thou seest, no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth [k],
So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich'd
Of nations [l]: there the Capitol thou seest,
Above the rest lifting his stately head
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable; and there Mount Palatine,
The imperial palace, compass huge, and high
The structure [m], skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements conspicuous far,
Turrets, and terraces [n], and glittering spires:
Many a fair edifice besides, more like
Houses of gods (so well I have disposed
My aery microscope), thou mayst behold,
Outside and inside both [o], pillars and roofs,
Carved work, the hand of famed artificers,
In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold.
Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
What conflux issuing forth, or entering in;
Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state [p],

showed to our Saviour all the kingdoms of the world. Some suppose it was done by vision; others, by Satan's creating phantasms or species of different kingdoms, and presenting them to our Saviour's sight, &c. But what Milton here alludes to is a fanciful notion which I find imputed to our famous countryman Hugh Broughton. Cornelius a Lapide, in summing up the various opinions upon this subject, gives it in these words:—"Alii subtiliter imaginantur, quod dæmon per multa specula sibi invicem objecta species regnorum ex uno speculo in aliud et aliud continuo reflexerit, idque fecerit usque ad oculos Christi."—THYER.

[k] *Great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth.*

See 'Par. Lost,' b. xi. 405.—DUNSTER.

[l] *With the spoils enrich'd*
Of nations.

This refers to the immense sums carried to Rome, and deposited in the treasury by their generals; and to what was amassed by the fines which the Romans arbitrarily set upon other states and kingdoms, as the price of their friendship.—DUNSTER.

This might be said of Paris in the time of Napoleon.

[m] *There Mount Palatine,*
The imperial palace, compass huge, and high
The structure.

See Claudian, "De VI. Cons. Hon." 35.—DUNSTER.

[n] *Turrets, and terraces.*

Mr. Dunster remarks, that Milton here seems to have blended the old English castle with his Roman view: and Mr. Warton thinks that Milton was impressed with this idea from his vicinity to Windsor Castle. See 'Comus,' ver. 934.—TODD.

[o] *Outside and inside both.*

So Menippus, in Lucian's "Icaro-Menippus," could see clearly and distinctly, from the moon, cities and men upon the earth, and what they were doing, both without doors and within, where they thought themselves most secret. Luciani Opp. vol. ii. p. 197, edit. Græv.—CALTON.

[p] *Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces*
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state, &c.

The rapacity of the Roman provincial governors, and their eagerness to take possession of their prey, is here strongly marked by the word "hasting." Their

Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power,
Legions and cohorts, turms [q] of horse and wings:
Or embassies from regions far remote,
In various habits, on the Appian road,
Or on the Emilian [r]: some from farthest south,
Syene [s], and where the shadow both way falls,
Meroe, Nilotick isle; and, more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea;
From the Asian kings, and Parthian among these [t];
From India and the golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed [u];
From Gallia, Gades [v], and the British west;
Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians, north
Beyond Danubius to the Taurick pool [w].
All nations now to Rome obedience pay;

pride and vanity were not less than their rapacity, and were displayed, not only in their triumphs, but in their magisterial state upon all occasions.—DUNSTER.

[q] *Turms.*

Troops of horse; a word coined from the Latin, *turma.* Virg. Æn. v. 560—"equitum turmæ."—NEWTON.

[r] *On the Appian road,*
Or on the Emilian.

The Appian road from Rome led towards the south of Italy, and the Emilian towards the north. The nations on the Appian road are included in ver. 69–76, those on the Emilian in ver. 77–79.—NEWTON.

[s] *Some from farthest south,*
Syene.

Milton had in view what he read in Pliny and other authors; that Syene was the limit of the Roman empire, and the remotest place to the south that belonged to it. Or it may be said, that poets have not scrupled to give the epithets *extremi, ultimi,* to any people that lived a great way off; and that possibly Milton intended farthest south to be so applied both to Syene and to Meroe.—JORTIN.

[t] *And Parthian among these.*

The tempter having failed to captivate our Lord with the view of the immense forces of the Parthians and their military preparations and skill, now endeavours to impress upon him a sense of the great power of the Roman empire.—DUNSTER.

[u] *Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed.*

I have been told, that a truly respectable prelate, whose taste and literary acquirements are of the first eminence, has noticed this verse as one of the most picturesque lines that he has ever met with in poetry: almost every word conveys a distinct idea, and generally one of great effect.—DUNSTER.

[v] *Gades.*

The old Roman name for Cadiz or Cales, a principal sea-port of Spain without the Straits of Gibraltar; and is here put to signify the part of Spain most distant from Rome; which the Romans distinguished by the name of "Hispania ulterior."—DUNSTER.

[w] *Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians, north*
Beyond Danubius to the Taurick pool.

The Danube was the southern boundary of ancient Germany. From the mouth of the Danube to the Palus Mæotis, all along the shores of the Euxine sea, lay the European Scythians; and beyond them northward, the Saùromatæ, Sarmatæ, or Sarmatians: all the intermixed nations seem at the time of the Christian æra to have ranked under the general head of Scythians or Sarmatians. Milton may therefore be understood, in this description, as meaning to comprehend all the European nations from the banks of the Danube, and the shores of the Euxine, to the Northern ocean.—DUNSTER.

To Rome's great emperour, whose wide domain,
In ample territory, wealth, and power,
Civility of manners, arts, and arms,
And long renown, thou justly mayst prefer
Before the Parthian[x]. These two thrones except,
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shared among petty kings too far removed.
These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory[y].
This emperour[z] hath no son, and now is old,
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retired
To Capreæ, an island small, but strong,
On the Campanian shore; with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy;
Committing to a wicked favourite[a]
All publick cares, and yet of him suspicious;
Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,
Endued with regal virtues, as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Mightst thou expel this monster[b] from his throne,
Now made a stye; and, in his place ascending,
A victor people free from servile yoke!
And with my help thou mayst; to me the power
Is given, and by that right I give it thee[c].

[x] *Thou justly mayst prefer*
Before the Parthian.

The tempter had before advised our Saviour to prefer the Parthian, b. iii. 363: but this shuffling and inconsistency is very natural and agreeable to the father of lies, and by these touches his character is set in a proper light.—NEWTON.

There appears to me here no inconsistency whatever. What is here said rather marks the great and accomplished art of the tempter, than indicates a "shuffling." Satan only varies the attack, by changing the ground on which it had not been successful. His manner of doing it is perfectly plausible. "You," says he, "may very possibly prefer an alliance with the Romans, whose power and splendour I have just displayed, to one with the Parthians; and you judge wisely in so doing."—DUNSTER.

[y] *I have shown thee all*
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.

The poet, in the preceding book, had displayed at large the military power of the Parthian empire. In the beginning of this book he shows and describes imperial Rome, the "queen of the earth," in all her magnificence of splendour and pride of power; and introduces the rest of the world as subject to her, doing homage to her greatness, and suing to her with embassies.—DUNSTER.

[z] *This emperour, &c.*

This account of the emperor Tiberius is perfectly agreeable to Suetonius and Tacitus, who have painted this monster, as Milton calls him, in such colours as he deserved to be described in.—NEWTON.

[a] *A wicked favourite.*

Our poet, I dare say, read, with great displeasure and disgust, the fulsome praises of Paterculus on Sejanus, in his history.—JOS. WARTON.

[b] *Expel this monster.*

Thus Cicero, II. in Catilin, 1.—DUNSTER.
See also Juvenal, Sat. iv. 2.

[c] *To me the power*
Is given, and by that right I give it thee.

Luke iv. 6—DUNSTER.

Aim therefore at no less than all the world;
Aim at the highest: without the highest attain'd,
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophesied what will.
To whom the Son of God, unmoved, replied:—
Nor doth this grandeur and majestick show
Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind; though thou shouldst add to tell
Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts[d]
On citron tables or Atlantick stone[e]
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read)
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
Chios, and Crete[f], and how they quaff in gold,
Crystal, and myrrhine cups, emboss'd with gems
And studs of pearl[g]; to me shouldst tell, who thirst
And hunger still. Then embassies thou show'st
From nations far and nigh; what honour that,
But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries[h]? Then proceed'st to talk
Of the emperour, how easily subdued,
How gloriously: I shall, thou say'st, expel
A brutish monster: what if I withal
Expel a devil who first made him such?
Let his tormentor conscience find him out[i];

[d] *Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts.*

The poet had here perhaps in his mind the account given by Suetonius, cap. 13, of the sumptuous gluttonies of Vitellius; or the immense sums expended in this way by the famous Apicius; of which see Seneca, "De Consolat. ad Helv." cap. 10.—DUNSTER.

[e] *On citron tables or Atlantick stone.*

Tables made of citron wood were in such request among the Romans, that Pliny calls it *mensarum insania.* They were beautifully veined and spotted. See his account of them, lib. xiii. sect. 29. I do not find that the "Atlantick stone" or marble was so celebrated: the *Numidicus lapis* and *Numidicum marmor* are often mentioned in Roman authors.—NEWTON.

[f] *Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,*
Chios, and Crete.

The three former were of the most famous Campanian wines among the Romans: the Falernian was commonly considered as their prime wine.—DUNSTER.

[g] *How they quaff in gold,*
Crystal, and myrrhine cups, emboss'd with gems
And studs of pearl.

"Crystal and myrrhine cups" are often joined together by ancient authors. "Murrhina et crystallina ex eadem terra effodimus, quibus pretium faceret ipsa fragilitas. Hoc argumentum opum, hæc vera luxuriæ gloria existimata est, habere quod posset statim totum perire." Plin. lib. xxxiii. Proem.—NEWTON.

[h] *So many hollow compliments and lies,*
Outlandish flatteries?

Possibly not without an allusion to the congratulatory embassies on the Restoration.—DUNSTER.

[i] *Let his tormentor conscience find him out.*

Milton, as Dr. Jortin observes, had here in his mind Tacitus; who, having related the extraordinary letters written by Tiberius to the senate, adds: "Adeo facinora atque

For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people, victor once, now vile and base[j];
Deservedly made vassal; who, once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well;
But govern ill the nations under yoke,
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured[k]
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed[l];
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still;
And from the daily scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved?
Or could of inward slaves make outward free[m]?
Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
On David's throne[n], it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth;
Or as a stone, that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides throughout the world;
And of my kingdom there shall be no end:

flagitia sua ipsi quoque in supplicium verterant. Neque frustra præstantissimus sapientiæ firmare solitus est, si recludantur tyrannorum mentes, posse aspici laniatus et ictus; quando ut corpora verberibus, ita sævitia, libidine, malis consultis, animus dilaceretur. Quippe Tiberium non fortuna, non solitudines protegebant, quin tormenta pectoris suasque ipse pœnas faterctur." Annal. vi. 6.—DUNSTER.

[j] *That people, victor once, now vile and base, &c.*

This description of the corruption and decline of the Roman empire, contained in this and the following ten lines, is at once concisely fine, and accurately just.—DUNSTER.

[k] *Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured, &c.*

The connexion of luxury, cruelty, and effeminacy has been often remarked in all ages.

[l] *Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed.*

Beast-fights were exhibited among the Romans with great variety: sometimes, by bringing water into the amphitheatre, even sea-monsters were introduced for the purpose of combating with wild beasts. This is mentioned by Calphurnius, Ecl. vii. 65. The men that fought with wild beasts were called "bestiarii." these were principally condemned persons; although there were some who hired themselves like gladiators.—DUNSTER.

[m] *Or could of inward slaves make outward free?*

This noble sentiment Milton explains more fully, and expresses more diffusely, in his 'Paradise Lost,' b. xii. 90:—

> Therefore since he permits
> Within himself unworthy powers to reign
> Over free reason, God in judgment just
> Subjects him from without to violent lords.

So also again, in his xiith Sonnet:—

> License they mean, when they cry liberty;
> For who loves that must first be wise and good.—THYER.

[n] *Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit*
On David's throne, &c.

A particular manner of expression, but frequent in Milton; as if he had said, Know, therefore, when the season comes to sit on David's throne; that throne "shall be like a tree," &c., alluding to the parable of the mustard-seed grown into "a tree, so that the birds lodge in the branches thereof," Matt. xiii. 32: and to (what that parable also respects) Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great "tree, whose height reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth," Dan. iv. 11.—NEWTON.

Means there shall be to this; but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.
To whom the tempter, impudent, replied:
I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valuest, because offer'd, and reject'st:
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict:
On the other side, know also thou, that I
On what I offer set as high esteem,
Nor what I part with mean to give for naught:
All these, which in a moment thou behold'st,
The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give
(For, given to me, I give to whom I please),
No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,
On this condition; if thou wilt fall down,
And worship me as thy superiour lord[o]

[o] *On this condition; if thou wilt fall down,*
And worship me as thy superiour lord.

In my opinion (and Mr. Thyer concurs with me in the observation), there is nothing in the disposition and conduct of the whole poem so justly liable to censure as the awkward and preposterous introduction of this incident in this place. The tempter should have proposed the condition at the same time that he offered the gifts, as he doth in Scripture; but after his gifts have been absolutely refused, to what purpose was it to propose the "impious condition?" Could he imagine that our Saviour would accept the kingdoms of the world upon "the abominable terms" of falling down and worshipping him, just after he had rejected them unclogged with any terms at all? Well might the author say that Satan "impudent replied;" but that doth not solve the objection. —NEWTON.

I differ entirely from Dr. Newton and his very able coadjutor, respecting this part of the poem. The management of the poet seems so far from objectionable, that I conceive this passage to be a striking instance of his great judgment in arranging his work, as well as of his great skill in decorating it. The conduct and demeanour of Satan had hitherto been artfully plausible, and such as seemed most likely to forward his designs. At the beginning of this book, after repeated defeats, he is described desperate of success, and "flung from his hope;" but still he proceeds. Upon his next attack failing, the paroxysm of his desperation rises to such a height, that he is completely thrown off his guard, and at once betrays himself and his purpose, by bringing forward, with the most intemperate indiscretion, those "abominable terms," which, could it have been possible for his temptations to have succeeded, we may imagine were intended in the end to have been proposed to our Lord. This then is the full discovery who Satan really was; for it must be observed, that though Jesus in the first book (ver. 356) had declared that he knew the tempter through his disguise, still the temptation proceeds in the same manner as if he had not known him: at least, our Lord's conduct is not represented as influenced by any suspicion of an insidious adversary. As to proposing the condition together with the gifts; this I conceive could not be done without changing the whole plan of the poem; as by pushing the question immediately to a point, it must have precluded the gradually progressive temptations which the poet so finely brings forward. It might perhaps have been wished that the circumstance of Satan's betraying himself and his purpose, under the irritation of defeat and desperation, had been kept back, till the subsequent temptation, in the highly finished description of Athens, with all its pride of learning and philosophy, had been tried, and had also failed. But the apologetic speech of Satan (ver. 196), in which he recovers himself from his intemperate impetuosity, repairs the indiscretion of his present violent irritation, so far as to pave the way for another temptation, is not only marked with such singular art and address as is truly admirable, but likewise gives a material variety and relief to this part of the poem; which I cannot wish to have been in any respect different from what it is, as I do not conceive that even Milton himself could have improved it.—DUNSTER.

(Easily done), and hold them all of me;
For what can less so great a gift deserve?
Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain:
I never liked thy talk, thy offers less;
Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter
The abominable terms, impious condition:
But I endure the time, till which expired
Thou hast permission on me. It is written,
The first of all commandments, Thou shalt worship
The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve;
And darest thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee, accursed? now more accursed
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve,
And more blasphemous; which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given?
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp'd;
Other donation none thou canst produce.
If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
God over all supreme [p]? If given to thee,
By thee how fairly is the Giver now
Repaid! But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since [q]. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
As offer them to me, the Son of God?
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God?
Get thee behind me; plain thou now appear'st
That evil one [r], Satan for ever damn'd.
To whom the fiend, with fear abash'd, replied:
Be not so sore offended, Son of God,
Though sons of God both angels are and men,
If I to try, whether in higher sort
Than these thou bear'st that title, have proposed
What both from men and angels I receive,
Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth,
Nations besides from all the quarter'd winds,
God of this world invoked [s], and world beneath:

[p] *The King of kings,*
God over all supreme.
1 Tim. vi. 15. Romans ix. 5.—DUNSTER.

[q] *But gratitude in thee is lost*
Long since.
Milton had made Satan declare, long before, 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 109,
all good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my good!—DUNSTER.

[r] *That evil one.*
The ὁ πονηρός, the pre-eminently "wicked one."—TODD.

[s] *God of this world invoked.*
Milton pursues the same notion which he had adopted in his 'Paradise Lost,' of the gods of the Gentiles being the fallen angels; and he is supported in it by the authority of the primitive fathers.—THYER.

The devil, in Scripture, is termed "the god of this world," 2 Cor. iv. 4.—DUNSTER.

Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
To me most fatal, me it most concerns:
The trial hath indamaged thee no way,
Rather more honour left, and more esteem;
Me naught advantaged, missing what I aim'd.
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
Advise thee; gain them as thou canst, or not:
And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclined
Than to a worldly crown; addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute;
As by that early action may be judged,
When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st
Alone into the temple; there wast found
Among the gravest rabbies, disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair [t],
Teaching, not taught. The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day: be famous then
By wisdom [u]; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend.
All knowledge is not couch'd in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch, or what the prophets wrote:
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Nature's light,
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st [v].
Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee, hold conversation meet?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their idolisms [w], traditions, paradoxes?

[t] *Fitting Moses' chair.*

Moses' chair was the chair in which the doctors sitting expounded the law either publicly to the people, or privately to their disciples. See Matt. xxiii. 2.—NEWTON.

[u] *Be famous then*
By wisdom.

We are now come to the last temptation, properly so called; and it is worth the reader's while to observe how well Satan has pursued the scheme which he had proposed in council, b. ii. 225:—

Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy; with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise.

The gradation also in the several allurements proposed is very fine; and I believe one may justly say, that there never was a more exalted system of morality comprised in so short a compass: never were the arguments for vice dressed up in more delusive colours, nor were they ever answered with more solidity of thought, or acuteness of reasoning.—THYER.

[v] *Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st.*

Alluding to those charming lines, b. i. 221:—

Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear.—NEWTON.

[w] *Idolisms.*

"Idolisms" is, I believe, a word of Milton's own fabrication: it seems not so much

Errour by his own arms is best evinced[x].
Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,
Westward, much nearer by south-west[y], behold;
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands[z],
Built nobly[a]; pure the air, and light the soil[b];
Athens, the eye of Greece[c], mother of arts
And eloquence[d], native to famous wits

to mean the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles, as the opinions with which they might endeavour to defend it.—DUNSTER.

[x] *Errour by his own arms is best evinced.*

"Evinced" is here used in its Latin signification of subdued or conquered.—DUNSTER.

[y] *Westward, much nearer by south-west.*

This might be understood W. by S. that is, one point from west towards south-west; which is nearly the actual position of Athens with respect to Mount Niphates. Or it may only mean, that our Lord had no occasion to change his situation on the western side of the mountain (see ver. 25 of this book); but only as the latitude of Athens was four degrees southward of that of Rome, that he must now direct his view so much more towards the south-west, than when he was looking at Rome, which lay nearly due west, or in a small degree north-west of Mount Niphates.—DUNSTER.

[z] *Where on the Ægean shore a city stands.*

The following description of Athens, and its learning, is extremely grand and beautiful. Milton's Muse, as was before observed, is too much cramped down by the argumentative cast of his subject, but emerges upon every favourable occasion; and, like the sun from under a cloud, bursts into the same bright vein of poetry, which shines out more frequently, though not more strongly, in the 'Paradise Lost.'—THYER.

I cannot persuade myself, that our author, when he selected his subject and formed his plan, considered himself as any ways cramped down by it. I have no doubt, that he looked forward with pleasure to the opportunities, which he foresaw it would afford him, of introducing this and other admirable descriptions: and that he was particularly aware of the great effect which the argumentative cast of part of his poem would give to that which is purely descriptive.—DUNSTER.

I am sure that this critical opinion of Dunster is perfectly correct. It is the theory on which I have constantly proceeded in judging of Milton.

[a] *Built nobly.*

Homer, speaking of Athens, calls it "a well-built city," Il. ii. 546.—NEWTON.

[b] *Pure the air, and light the soil.*

Attica being a mountainous country, the soil was light, and the air sharp and pure; and therefore said to be productive of sharp wits.—NEWTON.

"Pure the air and light the soil," Mr. Calton remarks is, from Dio Chrysostom, Orat. vii. A variety of passages which assert the clearness and pureness of the air of Athens, may be seen in Gronov. Thesaur. Gr. Antiq. "De Fortuna Atticarum," vol. v. p. 1696, edit. fol. 1699.—TODD.

[c] *Athens, the eye of Greece.*

Demosthenes somewhere calls Athens "the eye of Greece," but I cannot at present recollect the place: in Justin it is called one of the two eyes of Greece, Sparta being the other (l. v. c. 8); and Catullus (xxxii. 1) terms Sirmio the eye of islands; but the metaphor is more properly applied to Athens than any other place, as it was the great seat of learning.—NEWTON.

[d] *Mother of arts*
And eloquence.

Justin (l. v. c. 9) terms Athens "patria communis eloquentiæ:" and, l. ii. c. 6, he says, "Literæ certe et facundia veluti templum Athenas habent." Cicero abounds in panegyrics upon this celebrated seat of learning and eloquence: he describes it, "illas omnium doctrinarum inventrices Athenas, in quibus summa dicendi vis et inventa est et perfecta," "De Orator." l. i. 13. ed Proust. And in his "Brutus," sect. 39, he characterises it, "ea urbs, in qua et nata et alta sit eloquentia."—DUNSTER.

Or hospitable[e], in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades.
See there the olive grove of Academe[f],
Plato's retirement[g], where the Attick bird[h]
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long[i];
There flowery hill Hymettus[j], with the sound
Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls[k]
His whispering stream: within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages; his, who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world[l],

[e] *Hospitable.*

Diodorus describes the Athenians as "hospitable to wits" of other countries, by admitting all persons whatever to benefit by the instruction of the learned teachers in their city, l. xiii. c. 27. The Athenians were remarkable for their general hospitality towards strangers, to whom their city was always open; and for whose reception and accommodation they had particular officers, under the title of πρόξενοι, i. e. "the receivers of strangers in the name of the whole city."—DUNSTER.

[f] *The olive grove of Academe.*

This whole description of the Academe is infinitely charming. Dr. Newton has justly observed that "Plato's Academy was never more beautifully described."—DUNSTER.

[g] *Plato's retirement.*

Diogenes Laertius relates, in his "Life of Plato," that Plato, "being returned to Athens from his journey to Egypt, settled himself in the Academy, a gymnasium or place of exercise in the suburbs of that city, beset with woods, taking name from Academus, one of the heroes, as Eupolis:—

In sacred Academus' shady walks;

and he was buried in the Academy, where he continued most of his time teaching philosophy: whence the sect which sprung from him was called Academic."—NEWTON.

[h] *Where the Attick bird, &c.*

Philomela, who according to the fables was changed into a nightingale, was the daughter of Pandion, king of Athens. Hence the nightingale is called "Atthis," in Latin, quasi Attica avis.—NEWTON.

Gray has imitated this expression in his "Ode to Spring:"—

The Attic warbler pours her throat
Responsive to the cuckoo's note.

[i] *Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long.*

Dr. Newton observes that perhaps there never was a verse more expressive of the harmony of the nightingale than this. Homer has a description of the song of that bird, which is not dissimilar, Odyss. xix. 521.—DUNSTER.

[j] *There flowery hill Hymettus, &c.*

Valerius Flaccus calls it "florea juga Hymetti," Argonaut. v. 344; and the honey was so much esteemed and celebrated by the ancients, that it was reckoned the best of the Attic honey, as the Attic honey was said to be the best in the world.—NEWTON.

[k] *There Ilissus rolls.*

Mr. Calton and Mr. Thyer have observed with me, that Plato hath laid the scene of his Phædrus on the banks, and at the spring, of this pleasant river.—NEWTON.

[l] *Who bred*
Great Alexander to subdue the world.

We are told by Cicero, that Aristotle, having observed how Isocrates had risen to celebrity on the sole ground of florid declamation, was thereby induced to add to his own stock of solid knowledge the external grace of oratorical embellishments; which recommended him so much to Philip of Macedon, that he fixed upon him to be preceptor to his son Alexander, whom he wished to be taught at once conduct and eloquence.—"De Orator." iii. 41, ed. Proust.—DUNSTER.

Lyceum there [m], and painted Stoa [n] next:
There shalt thou hear and learn the secret power
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand; and various-measured verse,
Æolian charms [o] and Dorian lyrick odes,
And his [p] who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer call'd [q],
Whose poem Phœbus challenged for his own [r]:
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians [s] taught
In chorus or iambick [t], teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight received
In brief sententious precepts [u], while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life [v],
High actions and high passions best describing [w]:

[m] *Lyceum there.*

The Lyceum was the school of Aristotle, who had been tutor to Alexander the Great, and was the founder of the sect of the Peripatetics; so called from his walking and teaching philosophy.—NEWTON.

[n] *Painted Stoa.*

Stoa was the school of Zeno, whose disciples from the place had the name of Stoics; and this stoa, or portico, being adorned with variety of paintings, was called in Greek ποικίλη, or "various," and here by Milton the "painted Stoa."—NEWTON.

[o] *Æolian charms, &c.*

Æolia carmina; verses such as those of Alcæus and Sappho, who were both of Mitylene in Lesbos, an island belonging to the Æolians: "and Dorian lyrick odes;" such as those of Pindar.—NEWTON.

[p] *And his, &c.*

Our author agrees with those writers who speak of Homer as the father of all kinds of poetry.—NEWTON.

[q] *Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer call'd.*

Our author here follows Herodotus, in his life of Homer, where it is said that he was born near the river Meles, and that from thence his mother named him at first Melesigenes.—NEWTON.

[r] *Whose poem Phœbus challenged for his own.*

Alluding to a Greek epigram, in the first book of the "Anthologia:"—

Ἠείδον μὲν ἐγὼν, ἐχάρασσε δὲ θεῖος Ὅμηρος.—NEWTON.

[s] *The lofty grave tragedians.*

Æschylus is thus characterised by Quinctilian:—"Tragœdias primum in lucem Æschylus protulit, sublimis et gravis, et grandiloquus," &c., l. x. c. 1, where also the same author, comparing Sophocles and Euripides, says, "gravitas, et cothurnus, et sonus Sophoclis videtur esse sublimior." Tragedy was termed "lofty" by the ancients from its style, but at the same time not without a reference to the elevated buskin which the actors wore.—DUNSTER.

[t] *Chorus or iambick.*

The two constituent parts of the ancient tragedy were the dialogue, written chiefly in the iambic measure; and the chorus, which consisted of various measures.—NEWTON.

[u] *With delight received*
In brief sententious precepts.

This description particularly applies to Euripides, who, next to Homer, was Milton's favourite Greek author.—DUNSTER.

[v] *Of fate, and chance, and change in human life.*

The arguments most frequently selected by the Greek tragic writers, and indeed by their epic poets also, were the accomplishment of some oracle, or some supposed decree of fate.—DUNSTER.

[w] *High actions and high passions best describing.*

"High actions" refer to fate and chance, the arguments and incidents of tragedy;

Thence to the famous orators [x] repair,
Those ancient [y], whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratie,
Shook the arsenal, and fulmined o'er Greece [z]
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne [a]:
To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,
From Heaven descended to the low-roof'd house
Of Socrates [b]; see there his tenement,
Whom well inspired the oracle pronounced
Wisest of men; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams that water'd all the schools
Of Academicks [c] old and new [d], with those
Surnamed Peripateticks, and the sect

"high passions" to the *peripetia*, or change of fortune, which included the πάθος, or affecting part.—DUNSTER.

[x] *Thence to the famous orators, &c.*

How happily does Milton's versification, in this and the following lines, concerning the Socratic philosophy, express what he is describing! In the first we feel, as it were, the nervous rapid eloquence of Demosthenes, and the latter have all the gentleness and softness of the humble modest character of Socrates.—THYER.

[y] *Those ancient.*

Milton was of the same opinion as Cicero, who preferred Pericles, Hyperides, Æschines, Demosthenes, and the orators of their times, to Demetrius Phalereus, and those of the subsequent ages.—NEWTON.

[z] *Whose resistless eloquence*
Wielded at will that fierce democratie,
Shook the arsenal, and fulmined o'er Greece.

Alluding, as Dr. Newton and Dr. Jortin have both observed, to what Aristophanes has said of Pericles in his "Acharnenses:"—

Ἤστραπτεν, ἐβρόντα, ξυνεκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα.—DUNSTER.

[a] *To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.*

As Pericles and others "fulmined over Greece to Artaxerxes' throne" against the Persian king, so Demosthenes was the orator particularly, who "fulmined over Greece to Macedon" against king Philip, in his Orations, therefore denominated Philippics.—NEWTON.

[b] *From Heaven descended to the low-roof'd house*
Of Socrates.

Mr. Calton thinks the author alludes to Juvenal, Sat. xi. 27:—"e cœlo descendit γνῶθι σεαυτόν," as this famous Delphic precept was the foundation of Socrates' philosophy; and so much used by him, that it hath passed with some for his own. Or, as Mr. Warburton and Mr. Thyer conceive, the author here probably alludes to what Cicero says of Socrates; "Socrates autem primus philosophiam devocavit e cœlo, et in urbibus collocavit, et in domos etiam introduxit."—"Tusc. Disp." v. 4.—NEWTON.

[c] *From whose mouth issued forth*
Mellifluous streams, that water'd all the schools
Of Academicks, &c.

Thus Quintilian calls Socrates "fons philosophorum," l. i. c. 10. As the ancients looked on Homer to be the father of poetry, so they esteemed Socrates the father of moral philosophy.—NEWTON.

But our author, in speaking here of "the mellifluous streams of philosophy that issued from the mouth of Socrates, and watered all the various schools or sects of philosophers," had in his mind a passage of Ælian ("Var. Hist." l. xiii. c. 22), where it is said that "Galaton the painter drew Homer as a fountain, and the other poets drawing water from his mouth."—DUNSTER.

[d] *Old and new.*

The Academic sect of philosophers, like the Greek comedy, had its three epochs, old, middle, and new. Plato was the head of the old Academy, Arcesilas of the middle, and Carneades of the new.—DUNSTER.

Epicurean, and the Stoick severe.
These here revolve, or, as thou likest, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight:
These rules[e] will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire join'd.
To whom[f] our Saviour sagely thus replied:
Think not but that I know these things, or think
I know them not; not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I ought: he who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true[g];
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest of them all profess'd
To know this only, that he nothing knew[h];
The next to fabling fell, and smooth conceits[i];
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense[j],
Others in virtue placed felicity,
But virtue join'd with riches and long life[k];

[e] *These rules.*

There is no mention before of rules; but of poets, orators, and philosophers. We should read, therefore, "their rules," &c.—CALTON.

See, however, v. 264. "In brief sententious precepts," &c.

[f] *To whom, &c.*

This answer of our Saviour is as much to be admired for solid reasoning, and the many sublime truths contained in it, as the preceding speech of Satan is for that fine vein of poetry which runs through it: and one may observe in general, that Milton has quite, throughout this work, thrown the ornaments of poetry on the side of error; whether it was that he thought great truths best expressed in a grave, unaffected style; or intended to suggest this fine moral to the reader: that simple naked truth will always be an over-match for falsehood, though recommended by the gayest rhetoric, and adorned with the most bewitching colours.—THYER.

[g] *He who receives*
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true.

Peck, from this passage, supposes Milton to have been a Quaker. Milton was a sectarist on general principles, which cannot easily be reduced to any particular or separate system.—T. WARTON.

[h] *The first and wisest of them all profess'd*
To know this only, that he nothing knew.

Socrates; of whom Cicero, "Hic in omnibus fere sermonibus, qui ab iis, qui illum audierunt, perscripti varie, copiose sunt, ita disputat, ut nihil adfirmet ipse, refellat alios: nihil se scire dicat, nisi id ipsum: eoque præstare ceteris; quod illi quæ nesciant scire se putent; ipse, se nihil scire, id unum sciat."—Academic. i. 4.—NEWTON.

[i] *The next to fabling fell, and smooth conceits.*

Milton, in his Latin poem 'De Idea Platonica,' terms Plato "fabulator maximus," v. 38. This passage shows our poet inclined to censure the fictions of the philosopher; which are also noticed in early times.—DUNSTER.

[j] *A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense.*

These were the sceptics or Pyrrhonians, the disciples of Pyrrho, who asserted nothing to be either honest or dishonest, just or unjust; that men do all things by law and custom; and that in everything this is not preferable to that. This was called the sceptic philosophy, from its continual inspection, and never finding; and Pyrrhonian from Pyrrho.—NEWTON.

[k] *Others in virtue placed felicity,*
But virtue join'd with riches and long life.

These were the old Academics, and the Peripatetics, the scholars of Aristotle. See Cicero, "Academic." ii. 42, and "De Fin." ii. 11.—NEWTON.

In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease[l]:
The Stoick last[m] in philosophick pride,
By him call'd virtue, and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
Equal to God[n], oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
Which when he lists he leaves or boasts he can,
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts[o] conviction to evade.
Alas! what can they teach and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending[p]?
Much of the soul they talk, but all awry[q],
And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none[r];
Rather accuse him under usual names,

[l] *In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease.*

The "he" is here contemptuously emphatical.—DUNSTER.

[m] *The Stoick last, &c.*

The reason why Milton represents our Saviour taking such particular notice of the Stoics above the rest, was probably because they made pretensions to a more refined and exalted virtue than any of the other sects, and were at that time the most prevailing party among the philosophers, and the most revered and esteemed for the strictness of their morals, and the austerity of their lives. The picture of their virtuous man is perfectly just, as might easily be shown from many passages in Seneca and Antoninus; and the defects and insufficiency of their scheme could not possibly be set in a stronger light than they are by our author in the lines following.—THYER.

[n] *Equal to God.*

Dr. Newton here reads, "equals to God," &c., and conceives the sense to be so much improved, that the omission of the letter *s* must have been an error of the press. I retain the reading in Milton's own edition, as the sense appears sufficiently clear with it; neither do I see any material improvement resulting from the correction.—DUNSTER.

[o] *For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,*
Or subtle shifts.

"Vain boasts" relate to the stoical paradoxes; and "subtle shifts," to their dialectic, which this sect so much cultivated, that they were known equally by the name of Dialecticians and Stoics.—WARBURTON.

[p] *Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,*
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?

Having drawn most accurately the character of the Stoic philosopher, and exposed the insufficiency of his pretensions to superior virtue built on superior knowledge; the poet may be understood here as referring to the Holy Scriptures, as the only true source of information respecting the nature of God, the creation, and fall of man, &c.—DUNSTER.

[q] *Much of the soul they talk, but all awry.*

See what Dr. Warburton has said of the absurd notions of the ancient philosophers, concerning the nature of the soul, in his "Divine Legation," book iii. sect. 4.—NEWTON.

[r] *And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves*
All glory arrogate, to God give none.

Cicero speaks the sentiments of ancient philosophy upon this point, in "De Nat. Deor." iii. 36.—WARBURTON.

Fortune and Fate[s], as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not; or, by delusion,
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud[t]. However, many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome[u]: who reads
Incessantly[v], and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superiour
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?),
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself[w],
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge[x];
As children gathering pebbles on the shore[y].
Or, if I would delight my private hours
With musick or with poem; where, so soon
As in our native language, can I find
That solace? All our law and story strew'd
With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscribed[z],
Our Hebrew songs and harps[a], in Babylon

[s] *Rather accuse him under usual names,*
Fortune and Fate.

Several of the ancient poets and philosophers, but especially the Stoics, thus characterise the Deity.—DUNSTER.

[t] *An empty cloud.*

A metaphor taken from the fable of Ixion, who embraced an empty cloud for a Juno.—NEWTON.

[u] *Many books,*
Wise men have said, are wearisome.

Alluding to Eccles. xii. 12:—"Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh."—NEWTON.

[v] *Who reads*
Incessantly, &c.

See the same just sentiment in 'Paradise Lost,' b. vii. 126:—

Knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, &c.—THYER.

[w] *Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself.*

Milton would, I conceive, thus have characterised his old antagonist, Salmasius. —DUNSTER.

[x] *Worth a sponge.*

Milton most probably alluded to the sponge as used by the ancients for the purpose of blotting out anything they had written and did not choose to preserve.—DUNSTER.

[y] *As children gathering pebbles on the shore.*

In the anecdotes collected by Spence, which not many years ago were published by more than one editor, the following is told of Sir Isaac Newton:—"I don't know," said the sage, "what I may seem to the world; but as to myself, I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell, than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." See also Nichols's "Illustr. of Literature," vol. iv. p. 16.—TODD.

[z] *Our psalms with artful terms inscribed.*

He means the inscriptions prefixed to the beginning of several psalms; such as "To the chief musician upon Nehiloth," &c., to denote the various kinds of psalms or instruments.—NEWTON.

[a] *Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon*
That pleased so well our victors' ear.

This is said upon the authority of Psalm cxxxvii. 1, &c.—NEWTON.

That pleased so well our victors' ear, declare
That rather Greece from us[b] these arts derived;
Ill imitated[c] while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own,
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating[d]
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling epithets[e], thick laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek[f]; the rest,
Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs[g], to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is praised aright[h], and godlike men,
The Holiest of Holies, and his saints
(Such are from God inspired, not such from thee),
Unless where moral virtue is express'd

[b] *That rather Greece from us, &c.*

Clemens Alexandrinus ascribes the invention of hyms and songs to the Jews, and says that the Greeks stole theirs from them. "Stromat." l. i. p. 308, ed. Colon. 1688. He also charges the Grecian philosophers with stealing many of their doctrines from the Jewish prophets, l. i. p. 312.—DUNSTER.

[c] *Ill imitated.*

Because the subject of the Hebrew songs was God himself; the subject of the Grecian, the gross and ridiculous deities of their own invention.—TODD.

[d] *Personating.*

This is in the Latin sense of *persono*, "to celebrate loudly."—DUNSTER.

[e] *Swelling epithets.*

Greek compounds, as Dr. Warburton observes.—TODD.

[f] *Thick laid*
As varnish on a harlot's cheek.

As Milton, most probably, had in his mind the following lines of Shakspeare, "Hamlet," a. iii. s. 1:—

The harlot's cheek, beautified with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,
Than is my deed, &c.—DUNSTER.

[g] *Will far be found unworthy to compare*
With Sion's songs.

He was of this opinion not only in the decline of life, but likewise in his earlier days, as appears from the preface to his second book of the 'Reason of Church Government:' —"Or if occasion shall lead to imitate those magnifick odes and hymns wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most an end faulty. But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear, over all the kinds of lyrick poesy, to be incomparable."—NEWTON.

[h] *Where God is praised aright, &c.*

Such is part of the conclusion, which he deduces from his consideration of poetical subjects "of highest hope and hardest attempting,"—'Reason of Church Government,' pref. b. ii.:—"These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation; and are of power beside the office of a pulpit, to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, &c.; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, &c.; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints," &c.—TODD.

By light of Nature, not in all quite lost[i].
Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
The top of eloquence: statists[j] indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem;
But herein to our prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestick unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so[k];
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat:
These only with our law best form a king.
  So spake the Son of God: but Satan, now
Quite at loss (for all his darts were spent[l]),
Thus to our Saviour with stern brow replied:
  Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor aught
By me proposed in life contemplative
Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
What dost thou in this world? The wilderness
For thee is fittest place; I found thee there,
And thither will return thee: yet remember
What I foretell thee: soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never hadst rejected, thus
Nicely or cautiously[m], my offer'd aid,

[i] *(Such are from God inspired, not such from thee),*
Unless where moral virtue is express'd
By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.

The annotators puzzle themselves about this passage: it seems to me to mean, that the Greek compositions were "unworthy to compare with Sion's songs," from their vitiated taste; unless where "the light of nature" still remained so strong, as to enable them to feel and "express moral virtue."

[j] *Statists.*

Or "statesmen." A word, as Dr. Newton observes, in more frequent use formerly; as in Shakspeare, "Cymbeline," a. ii. s. 5:—

I do believe,
Statist though I am none, nor like to be.

And, as Mr. Dunster adds, Milton uses it in his 'Prose Works,' vol. i. p. 424, ed. 1698. He uses it also in the same sense in his 'Prose Works,' vol. i. ed. sup. p. 141, and p. 302.—TODD.

[k] *Makes a nation happy, and keeps it so.*

Horace, "Epist." I. vi. 2:—

Facere et servare beatam.—RICHARDSON.

[l] *For all his darts were spent.*

Possibly with reference to "the fiery darts of the wicked," Ephes. vi. 16.—DUNSTER.

The allusion may be to holy writ, in which the words of wicked men are expressly termed "arrows:"—"Who whet their tongue like a sword; and shoot out their arrows, even bitter words," Psalm lxiv. 3.—TODD.

[m] *Nicely or cautiously.*

Thus ver. 157 of this book:—

Nothing will please the difficult and nice.—DUNSTER.

Which would have set thee in short time with ease
On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season [n],
When prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd.
Now contrary, if I read aught in heaven [o],
Or heaven write aught of fate, by what the stars
Voluminous, or single characters,
In their conjunction met, give me to spell;
Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate
Attend thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death:
A kingdom they portend thee; but what kingdom,
Real or allegorick, I discern not;
Nor when; eternal sure, as without end,
Without beginning [p]; for no date prefix'd
Directs me in the starry rubrick set.
So saying, he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expired), and to the wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
As daylight sunk, and brought in lowering Night,
Her shadowy offspring [q]; unsubstantial both [r],

[n] *Fulness of time, thy season.*

Galat. iv. 4.—NEWTON.

[o] *If I read aught in heaven.*

A satire on Cardan, who with the boldness and impiety of an atheist and a madman, both of which he was, cast the nativity of Jesus Christ; and found by the great and illustrious concourse of stars, at his birth, that he must needs have the fortune which befell him, and become the author of a religion, which should spread itself far and near for many ages. The great Milton, with a just indignation of this impiety, hath satirized it in a very beautiful manner, by putting these reveries into the mouth of the devil.—NEWTON.

[p] *As without end,*
Without beginning.

"The poet," says Dr. Newton, "did not think it enough to discredit judicial astrology by making it patronized by the devil: to show at the same time the absurdity of it, he makes the devil also blunder in the expression of portending a kingdom which was without beginning. This," he adds, "destroys all he would insinuate." But the poet certainly never meant to make the tempter a blunderer. The fact is, the language is here intended to be highly sarcastic on the eternity of Christ's kingdom, respecting which the tempter says, he believes it will have one of the properties of eternity, that of never beginning. This is that species of insulting wit which the devils, in the sixth book of the 'Paradise Lost,' indulge themselves in on the first effects of the artillery they had invented; where Mr. Thyer, as cited by Dr. Newton, observes that Milton is not to be blamed for introducing it, "when we consider the character of the speakers, and that such kind of insulting wit is most peculiar to proud, contemptuous spirits."—DUNSTER.

[q] *Her shadowy offspring.*

Night was sometimes the parent, and Darkness the offspring: but Milton's theogony is conformable to Hyginus, who makes Caligo, or Darkness, the mother of Night, Day, Erebus, and Ether.—DUNSTER.

[r] *Unsubstantial both.*

Euripides, in a chorus of his "Orestes," personifying Night, calls upon her to arise from Erebus, or the shades below; where, it may be observed, the scholiast rectifies the philosophy of the poet, by explaining night or darkness as really "unsubstantial," and merely produced by the absence of light, or day.—DUNSTER.

Privation mere of light and absent day [s].
Our Saviour meek, and with untroubled mind
After his aery jaunt, though hurried sore,
Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
Whose branching arms thick intertwined might shield
From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head;
But, shelter'd, slept in vain; for at his head
The tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturb'd his sleep [t]. And either tropick now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven [u]; the clouds,
From many a horrid rift [v], abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mix'd, water with fire
In ruin reconciled [w]: nor slept the winds

[s] *Absent day*

This description, with what follows in the next nine lines, is very beautiful.

[t] *And soon with ugly dreams*
Disturb'd his sleep.

In the 'Paradise Lost,' the tempter begins his temptation of Eve by working on her imagination in dreams, b. iv. 800, &c. Here it may be observed, the tempter tries only "to disturb our Lord with ugly dreams;" and not to excite in him, as he did in Eve, "vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires."—DUNSTER.

[u] *And either tropick now*
'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven.

It thundered from both tropics, that is perhaps from the right and from the left. —JORTIN.

By "either tropick now 'gan thunder," Dr. Newton understands it thundered from the north and from the south; but he observes that the expression is inaccurate, the situation of our Saviour not being within the tropics. By "and both ends of heaven," he understands "from" or "at both ends of heaven;" the preposition being omitted, as is frequent in Milton. He therefore reads the passage thus:—

Either tropick now
'Gan thunder: and, both ends of heaven, the clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd, &c.

I agree, that by "either tropick" Milton most probably meant that it thundered from the north and south; but I conceive that by "both ends of heaven," he means east and west, the points where the sun rises and sets; as his purpose is to describe a general storm, not coming from any particular quarter, nor only from north and south, but from every point of the horizon at once.—DUNSTER.

[v] *The clouds,*
From many a horrid rift, &c.

This storm of Milton will lose nothing by a comparison with the celebrated ones of Homer in his fifth Odyssey, and of Virgil in his first Æneid. It is painted from nature, and in the boldest style. The night is a lowering one, with a heavy overcharged atmosphere: the storm commences with thunder from every part of the heavens: the rain then pours down in sudden precipitated torrents, finely marked by the epithet "abortive," as materially different from the gradual progression of the most violent common showers; and the lightnings seem to burst in a tremendous manner from "horrid rifts," from the most internal recesses of the sky. To make the horror complete, the winds, as is often the case in those countries where thunderstorms are most violent, join their force to that of the other two elements. Violent winds do not often attend violent thunder-storms in this country; and therefore Mr. Thyer has thought it necessary to observe that the accounts we have of hurricanes in the West Indies agree pretty much to this description: but such storms are not confined to tropical situations, or even to countries approaching towards them.—DUNSTER.

[w] *Water with fire*
In ruin reconciled.

Dr. Warburton understands this, "joined together to do hurt." Mr. Thyer says it is

Within their stony caves [x], but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world [y], and fell
On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high [z]; and sturdiest oaks,
Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts [a],
Or torn up sheer [b]. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken [c]! Nor yet stay'd the terrour there;
Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
Environ'd thee; some howl'd, some yell'd [d], some shriek'd,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace!
Thus pass'd the night so foul, till Morning fair
Came forth, with pilgrim steps, in amice gray [e];

a bold figure borrowed from Æschylus's description of the storm that scattered the Grecian fleet, "Agamem." v. 559.

But I apprehend Dr. Newton sees the passage in its true light, when he says, it only means "the fire and water fell (i. e. rushed down) together," according to Milton's usage of the word "ruin," 'Paradise Lost,' b. i. 46, and "ruining," b. vi. 868: thus also ver. 436 of this book: "After a night of storm so ruinous."—DUNSTER.

[x] *Nor slept the winds*
Within their stony caves.

Virgil describes the winds as placed by Jupiter in certain deep dark caves of the earth, under the control of their god Æolus, Æn. i. 521.

Lucan also speaks of the "stony prison" of the winds, lib. v. 609: and see Lucretius, lib. vi.—DUNSTER.

[y] *But rush'd abroad*
From the four hinges of the world.

That is, from the four cardinal points; *cardo* signifying both a "hinge" and a "cardinal point," Virgil, Æn. i. 85.

[z] *Though rooted deep as high, &c.*

Virgil, Æn. iv. 445:—

Quantum vertice ad auras
Æthereas, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.—RICHARDSON.

[a] *Loaden with stormy blasts.*

This has some resemblance to Horace's "aquilonibus querceta Gargani laborant," Od. II. ix.—DUNSTER.

[b] *Or torn up sheer.*

This magnificent description of the storm thus raised by Satan in the wilderness, is so admirable and striking that it need not be enlarged upon.

[c] *Yet only stood'st*
Unshaken.

Milton seems to have raised this scene out of what he found in Eusebius, "De Dem. Evan." (lib. ix. vol. ii. p. 434. ed. Col.) The fiends surround our Redeemer with their threats and terrors; but they have no effect.—CALTON.

[d] *Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round*
Environ'd thee; some howl'd, some yell'd, &c.

This too is from Eusebius, ibid, p. 435.—CALTON.

[e] *Till morning fair*
Came forth, with pilgrim steps, in amice gray.

"Amice," Dr. Newton observes, a significant word, is derived from the Latin *amicio*, "to clothe." But this does not hit the full meaning of Milton's imagery. The combination, "amice gray," is from what is called *graius amictus*, an officiating garment in the Roman ritual. "Amice" occurs simply for a priest's service-habit in Spenser's "Faer. Qu." I. iv. 18.—T. WARTON.

Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds[f],
And grisly spectres[g], which the fiend had raised
To tempt the Son of God[h] with terrours dire.
And now the sun[i] with more effectual beams
Had cheer'd the face of earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant or dropping tree; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
To gratulate the sweet return of morn.
Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The prince of darkness; glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came;
Yet with no new device (they all were spent);
Rather by this his last affront resolved,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage
And mad despite to be so oft repell'd.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Back'd on the north and west by a thick wood.
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape[j],
And in a careless mood thus to him said:

[f] *Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar*
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds, &c.

This is an imitation of a passage in the first Æneid of Virgil, where Neptune is represented with his trident laying the storm which Æolus had raised, ver. 142. There is the greater beauty in the English poet, as the scene he is describing under this charming figure is perfectly consistent with the course of nature, nothing being more common than to see a stormy night succeeded by a pleasant serene morning.—THYER.

[g] *And grisly spectres, &c.*

See our author's 'Ode on the Nativity,' st. xxvi. where he beautifully applies the vulgar superstition of spirits disappearing at the break of day as the ground-work of a comparison. He supposes that all the false deities of every species of the heathen theology departed at the birth of Christ, as spectres and demons vanish when the morning dawns. Under the same superstitious belief, Milton here makes the fiends retire, who had been assembled in the night to terrify our Saviour, when the morn arose.—T. WARTON.

[h] *To tempt the Son of God, &c.*

An eminent and excellent divine is of the same opinion as the poet with respect to "the evil spirits which the fiend raised," when he tempted our Lord:—"This, as we may probably suppose, was the devil's way of tempting or trying our Lord, during the forty days and nights of his fast; and many opportunities, no doubt, he had in so long a time by frightful dreams when he slept, frequent apparitions and illusions of evil spirits in the night," &c. Bragge on the Miracles, vol. ii. p. 12.—TODD.

[i] *And now the sun, &c.*

There is in this description all the bloom of Milton's youthful fancy. We may compare an evening scene of the same kind, 'Paradise Lost,' b. ii. 488–495.—THYER.

It is impossible to forbear remarking that the preceding description exhibits some of the finest lines which Milton has written in all his poems.—JOS. WARTON.

[j] *In wonted shape.*

That is, in his own proper shape, and not under any disguise, as at each of the former times when he appeared to our blessed Lord.—DUNSTER.

Compare 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 819:

So started up in his own shape the fiend.—TODD.

Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night: I heard the wrack,
As earth and sky would mingle; but myself
Was distant; and these flaws [k], though mortals fear them
As dangerous to the pillar'd frame of heaven [l],
Or to the earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone:
Yet, as being ofttimes noxious where they light
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill:
This tempest at this desert most was bent;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offer'd with my aid [m]
To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of fate, pursue thy way
Of gaining David's throne, no man knows when,
For both the when and how is nowhere told?
Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
For angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
The time and means. Each act is rightliest done,
Not when it must, but when it may be best:
If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
What I foretold thee [n], many a hard assay
Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
Ere thou of Israel's sceptre get fast hold;
Whereof this ominous night, that closed thee round,
So many terrours, voices, prodigies,
May warn thee, as a sure foregoing sign.

[k] *These flaws.*

"Flaw" is a sea-term, as Mr. Dunster observes, for a sudden storm or gust of wind. See 'Par. Lost,' b. x. 697.—TODD.

[l] *As dangerous to the pillar'd frame of heaven.*

See also 'Comus,' v. 597:—

If this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness.

In both, no doubt, alluding to Job xxvi. 11: "The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof."—THYER.

[m] *Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject*
The perfect season offer'd with my aid, &c.

Here is something to be understood after "Did I not tell thee?" The thing told we may suppose to be what Satan had before said, b. iii. 351:—

Thy kingdom, though foretold
By prophet or by angel, unless thou
Endeavour, as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain, &c.—DUNSTER.

[n] *What I foretold thee, &c.*

See ver. 374, and ver. 381 to ver. 389 of this book.—DUNSTER.

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
And stay'd not, but in brief him answer'd thus:
Me worse than wet thou find'st not; other harm,
Those terrours, which thou speak'st of, did me none:
I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
And threatening nigh: what they can do, as signs
Betokening, or ill boding, I contemn
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee:
Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrudest thy offer'd aid, that I, accepting,
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious spirit! and wouldst be thought my God;
And storm'st refused, thinking to terrify
Me to thy will! desist (thou art discern'd,
And toil'st in vain), nor me in vain molest.
To whom the fiend, now swoln with rage, replied:
Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born,
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt[o];
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the prophets: of thy birth at length,
Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew;
And of the angelick song in Bethlehem field,
On thy birth-night that sung thee Saviour born.
From that time seldom have I ceased to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth;
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all
Flock'd to the Baptist, I among the rest
(Though not to be baptized), by voice from heaven
Heard thee pronounced the Son of God beloved.

[o] *Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born,*
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt.

That Satan should seriously address our Lord as "virgin-born," because he entertained doubts whether he was in any respect the Son of God, is palpably inconsequent. "To be born of a virgin," Mr. Calton observes, from Bishop Pearson in a subsequent note, "is not so far above the production of all mankind, as to place our Lord in that singular eminence which must be attributed to the only begotten Son of God." But it must be recollected that the subject of this poem is a trial *ad probandum* whether the person declared to be the Son of God was really the Messiah; to acknowledge therefore that he was beyond all dispute born of a virgin, and had thereby fulfilled so material a prophecy respecting the Messiah, would be to admit in some degree the point in question: and however "virgin-born" might not be supposed to ascertain in any degree the claim to the Messiahship, still it could never be used in an address to our Lord meant to lower him to mere man. "Son of David," single and by itself, was an expression that Satan might be expected to use, when, characterising our Lord as a mere human being, he professed to disbelieve that he was the Son of God, born in a miraculous manner of a pure virgin, as it was foretold the Messiah should be. "Virgin-born" then must be considered as intended to be highly sarcastic: it is an epithet of the most pointed derision; resembling the "Hail, king of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands." It is that species of blasphemous insult, which might be expected from the arch-fiend, who at the opening of the speech is described "swoln with rage."—DUNSTER.

Dr. Joseph Warton is also of opinion, that "virgin-born" is here a highly sarcastical expression.—TODD.

Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
The Son of God; which bears no single sense.
The Son of God I also am, or was;
And if I was, I am; relation stands:
All men are sons of God; yet thee I thought
In some respect far higher so declared:
Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild;
Where, by all best conjectures, I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy:
Good reason then, if I before-hand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is: his wisdom, power, intent;
By parl or composition, truce or league,
To win him, or win from him what I can:
And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
Proof against all temptation [p], as a rock
Of adamant, and, as a centre, firm;
To the utmost of mere man both wise and good,
Not more; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,
Have been before contemn'd, and may again.
Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming Son of God by voice from heaven [q],
Another method I must now begin.
  So saying, he caught him up, and, without wing
Of hippogrif [r], bore through the air sublime,
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain;
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The holy city [s], lifted high her towers [t],

[p] *Proof against all temptation.*

Compare Spenser, "Faer. Qu." I. vi. 4:—

But wordes, and lookes, and sighs, she did abhore,
As rock of diamond stedfast evermore.

"Rock of adamant" is a phrase in Sandys's "Job," p. 29, ed. 1641, and in Shirley's "Imposture," p. 67, ed. 1652.—TODD.

[q] *What more thou art than man,*
Worth naming Son of God by voice from heaven.

See Bishop Pearson "On the Creed," p. 106.—CALTON.

[r] *Without wing*
Of hippogrif.

Here Milton designed a reflection upon the Italian poets, and particularly upon Ariosto. Ariosto frequently makes use of the hippogrif to convey his heroes from place to place.—NEWTON.

Not intended, as Dr. Newton supposes, as a reflection upon the Italian poets; but as an allusion merely to his favourite Ariosto, whose charming fancies he could not forget even in his old age.—JOS. WARTON.

[s] *The holy city.*

Jerusalem is frequently so called in the Old Testament: it is also called the "holy

And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires:
There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God[u]; and added thus in scorn:
  There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill: I to thy Father's house
Have brought thee, and highest placed: highest is best:
Now show thy progeny; if not to stand,
Cast thyself down; safely, if Son of God:
For it is written,—He will give command
Concerning thee to his angels: in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.
  To whom thus Jesus: Also it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God. He said, and stood[v]:
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell.
As when Earth's son Antæus[w] (to compare
Small things with greatest[x]), in Irassa[y] strove
With Jove's Alcides[z], and, oft foil'd, still rose[a],

city" by St. Matthew, who wrote his Gospel for the use of the Jewish converts; but by him only, of the four Evangelists.—DUNSTER.

[t] *Lifted high her towers.*

Sandys, describing Jerusalem, gives a minute account of the remarkable height of her various towers; some of which, he adds, were topped with spires, as Milton says, ver. 548. See his "Travels," edit. 1615, pp. 156, 157.—TODD.

[u] *There, on the highest pinnacle, he set*
The Son of God.

He has chosen to follow the order observed by St. Luke, in placing this temptation last; because if he had, with St. Matthew, introduced it in the middle, it would have broke that fine thread of moral reasoning, which is observed in the course of the other temptations.—THYER.

[v] *Tempt not the Lord thy God. He said, and stood.*

Here is what we may call, after Aristotle the ἀναγνώρισις, or the discovery. Christ declares himself to be the God and Lord of the tempter; and to prove it, stands upon the pinnacle. This was evidently the poet's meaning.—CALTON.

[w] *Earth's son Antæus.*

This simile in the person of the poet is amazingly fine.—WARBURTON.

[x] *(To compare*
Small things with greatest).

This is the third time Milton has imitated Virgil's "sic parvis componere magna solebam,"—"Ecl." i. 24. See 'Paradise Lost,' b. ii. 921; b. x. 306. Some such mode of qualifying common similes is necessary to a poet writing on divine subjects.—DUNSTER.

[y] *In Irassa.*

Antæus dwelt at the city Irassa, according to Pindar; but it was not there that he wrestled with Hercules, but at Lixos, according to Pliny, "Nat. Hist." lib. v. cap. 1.—MEADOWCOURT.

[z] *With Jove's Alcides.*

There were so many Hercules in the Grecian mythology and history, that it was necessary to specify when the principal Hercules, the son of Jupiter and Alcmena, was meant. Thus Cicero, "De Nat. Deor." lib. iii. 16:—"Quanquam quem potissimum Herculem colamus, scire sane velim; plures enim nobis tradunt ii, qui interiores scrutantur et reconditas literas; antiquissimum Jove natum." Varro says there were forty-three Hercules. It may be observed, that, though Hercules the son of Jupiter is

Receiving from his mother Earth new strength [b],
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple join'd;
Throttled at length in the air, expired and fell:
So, after many a foil, the tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults amidst his pride,
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall:
And as that Theban monster [c], that proposed
Her riddle, and him who solved it not devour'd;
That once found out and solved, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep:
So, struck with dread and anguish, fell the fiend;
And, to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
(Joyless triumphals of his hoped success)
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell;—and straight [d] a fiery globe
Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plumy vans received him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch [e], through the blithe air [f]:

introduced with propriety, the son of Jupiter by Alcmena had no right to be called Alcides; this being the proper name of the son of Amphitryon, whose father was Alcæus: and yet Virgil also refers to Alcides as the son of Jove, Æn. vi. 123.—DUNSTER.

[a] *And, oft foil'd, still rose.*

Thus in Tasso, where the soldan Solyman is slain by Rinaldo, the resistance he had before made is compared to that of Antæus, in his contest with Hercules, "Gier. Lib." c. xx. st. 108.—DUNSTER.

[b] *Receiving from his mother Earth new strength.*

So in Lucan, iv. 598:—

Hoc quoque tam vastas cumulavit munere vires
Terra sui fœtus, quod, cum tetigere parentem,
Jam defuncta vigent renovato robore membra.—DUNSTER.

[c] *And as that Theban monster, &c.*

The Sphinx, who, on her riddle being solved by Œdipus, threw herself into the sea.—NEWTON.

[d] *So Satan fell; and straight, &c.*

Thus in G. Fletcher's "Christ's Triumph on Earth," where Presumption is personified, and represented as in vain tempting our blessed Lord, st. xxxviii.:—

But, when she saw her speech prevailed naught,
Herself she tumbled headlong to the floor;
But him the angels on their feathers caught,
And to an airy mountain nimbly bore.—DUNSTER.

There is a peculiar softness and delicacy in this description, and neither circumstances nor words could be better selected to give the reader an idea of the easy and gentle descent of our Saviour, and to take from the imagination that horror and uneasiness which it is naturally filled with in contemplating the dangerous and uneasy situation he was left in.—THYER.

[e] *Who on their plumy vans received him soft*
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch, &c.

If this description is not from any famous painting, it is certainly a subject for one: but the grammatical inaccuracy here, I am afraid, cannot be palliated. "Him," according to the common construction of language, certainly must refer to Satan, the person last mentioned. The intended sense of the passage cannot indeed be misunderstood; but we grieve to find any inaccuracy in a part of the poem so eminently beautiful.—DUNSTER.

Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food[g], divine
Ambrosial fruits, fetch'd from the tree of life,
And, from the fount of life, ambrosial drink,
That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
What hunger, if aught hunger, had impair'd,
Or thirst; and, as he fed, angelick quires
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory[h]
Over temptation and the tempter proud:
  True image of the Father[i]; whether throned
In the bosom of bliss[j], and light of light

[f] *Through the blithe air.*

"Blithe air" is similar to "buxom air," 'Paradise Lost,' b. ii. 842; b. v. 270. But I conceive it to have a farther meaning, cheerful, or pleased with its burden; and it strikes me as an intended contrast to a passage in the 'Paradise Lost,' describing the flight of Satan, at the time he first rises from the burning lake, when "the dusky air is loaded with his weight," b. i. 226.—DUNSTER.

I humbly apprehend that "blithe air" is not similar to "buxom air;" for "buxom" signifies yielding, or flexible; and is, in this sense, the accustomed epithet to air among our elder poets: but the poet wrote "blithe air," in reference perhaps to the "fair morning after a dismal night; the clouds being now chased, and the winds laid;" and the air consequently "blithe," light and pure; the epithet "blithe" finely expressing what he says of the pure air of Paradise, 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 154:—

> to the heart inspires
> Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
> All sadness but despair.—TODD.

Here are difficulties made about what is sufficiently obvious.

[g] *And set before him spread*
A table of celestial food, &c.

Here is much resemblance to a stanza of G. Fletcher, "Christ's Triumph," &c., st. 61:—

> But to their Lord, now musing in his thought,
> A heavenly volley of light angels flew,
> And from his Father him a banquet brought
> Through the fine element; for well they knew
> After his lenten fast he hungry grew;
> And, as he fed, the holy quires combine
> To sing a hymn of the celestial trine.—DUNSTER.

[h] *Angelick quires*
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory, &c.

As Milton, in his 'Paradise Lost,' had represented the angels singing triumph upon the Messiah's victory over the rebel angels; so here again, with the same propriety, they are described celebrating his success against temptation; and to be sure, he could not have possibly concluded his work with greater dignity and solemnity, or more agreeably to the rules of poetic decorum.—THYER.

[i] *True image of the Father, &c.*

Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii.

All the poems that ever were written must yield, even 'Paradise Lost' must yield, to the 'Regained' in the grandeur of its close. Christ stands triumphant on the pointed eminence: the demon falls with amazement and terror, on his full proof of his being the very Son of God, whose thunder forced him out of heaven: the blessed angels receive new knowledge: they behold a sublime truth established, which was a secret to them at the beginning of the temptation: and the great discovery gives a proper opening to their hymn on the victory of Christ, and the defeat of the tempter.—CALTON.

[j] *Whether throned*
In the bosom of bliss.

Thus, in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iii. 238, the Son of God says to the Father:—

Conceiving; or, remote from heaven, enshrined
In fleshly tabernacle, and human form[j],
Wandering the wilderness; whatever place,
Habit, or state, or motion[k], still expressing
The Son of God, with godlike force endued
Against the attempter of thy Father's throne,
And thief of Paradise[l]! Him long of old
Thou didst debel[m], and down from heaven cast
With all his army: now thou hast avenged
Supplanted Adam, and, by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.
He never more henceforth will dare set foot
In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke[n]:
For though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,
A Saviour, art come down to re-install,
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,

I, for his sake, will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee;

and the Father, in reply, ver. 305:—

Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss
Equal to God, &c.

The Son of God, after having descended to earth to pass sentence on fallen man, is likewise similarly described returning to his Father in heaven, b. x. 325.—DUNSTER.

[j] *Enshrined*
In fleshly tabernacle, and human form.

St. John, i. 14, says, Καὶ ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν,—which, literally translated, is, "the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us." St. Paul, 2 Cor. v. 1, terms the body, or the human form, "our earthly house of this tabernacle." Thus also our author, in his Ode 'On the Passion:'—

He, sovran priest, stooping his regal head,
That dropp'd with odorous oil down his fair eyes,
Poor fleshly tabernacle entered.—DUNSTER.

[k] *Whatever place,*
Habit, or state, or motion.

I cannot think with Dr. Newton, that this is an allusion to Horace, Ep. I. xvii. 23:—

Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res.—JOS. WARTON.

No: the "habit, state, or motion," here refer to the look, the mien, the "habitus oris et vultus," of Cicero; and to the posture, or attitude, of the person. See 'Paradise Lost,' ix. 673: and so Quintilian—"Ut in statuis atque picturis videmus variari habitus, vultus, status."—TODD.

[l] *And thief of Paradise.*

Thus, 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 192, where Satan first enters Paradise:—"So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold."—DUNSTER.

The phrase probably owes its origin to St. John x. 1:—"He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."—TODD.

[m] *Thou didst debel.*

Virgil, Æn. vi. 853:—"Debellare superbos."—NEWTON.

[n] *His snares are broke.*

"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken," &c. Psalm cxxiv. 7.—DUNSTER.

Of tempter and temptation without fear.
But thou, infernal serpent! shalt not long
Rule in the clouds; like an autumnal star,
Or lightning [o], thou shalt fall from heaven, trod down
Under his feet [p]: for proof, ere this thou feel'st
Thy wound (yet not thy last and deadliest wound)
By this impulse received, and hold'st in hell
No triumph: in all her gates [q] Abaddon [r] rues
Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God: he, all unarm'd [s],
Shall chase thee, with the terrour of his voice,
From thy demoniack holds, possession foul [t],
Thee and thy legions; yelling they shall fly [u],
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
Lest he command them down into the deep,
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.—
Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan [v]! On thy glorious work
Now enter [w]; and begin to save mankind.

[o] *Like an autumnal star,*
Or lightning.

The poet here, as in other places, imitates profane authors and Scripture both together: Ἀστέρ' ὀπωρινῷ ἐναλίγκιον, Il. v. 5. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," Luke x. 18.—NEWTON.

[p] *Trod down*
Under his feet.

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet," Romans xvi. 20; where the marginal reading for *bruise* is *tread*. From whence in the 'Paradise Lost,' b. x. 190:—"Whom he shall tread at last under our feet."—DUNSTER.

[q] *In all her gates, &c.*

Matt. xvi. 18:—"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—DUNSTER.

[r] *Abaddon.*

The name of the angel of the bottomless pit, Rev. ix. 11; here applied to the bottomless pit itself.—NEWTON.

[s] *All unarm'd.*

In Vida's "Christiad," i. 192, Satan describes himself as having been completely foiled and defeated by our Saviour thus "all unarm'd:"—

Semper me reppulit ipse,
Non armis ullis fretus, non viribus usus.—DUNSTER.

[t] *From thy demoniack holds, possession foul.*

The demoniacs of the Gospel are constantly rendered in our version "possessed with a devil;" and Babylon is described "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit," Rev. xviii. 2.—DUNSTER.

[u] *Yelling they shall fly, &c.*

See Matt. viii. 28, and four following verses; and Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3.—DUNSTER.

[v] *Queller of Satan.*

'Paradise Lost,' b. xii. 311:—

Who shall quell
The adversary serpent, and bring back,
Through the world's wilderness, long-wander'd man,
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.—DUNSTER.

[w] *Now enter, &c.*

May I venture to say, that I think this line, the last of the triumphant song of the angels, would have been a fine and forcible conclusion of the poem, without the addition of the four following, which are comparatively feeble?—JOS. WARTON.

Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek [x],
Sung victor, and, from heavenly feast refresh'd [y],
Brought on his way with joy: he, unobserved,
Home to his mother's house private return'd [z].

[x] *Our Saviour meek.*

"Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart," Matt. xi. 29.—DUNSTER.

[y] *From heavenly feast refresh'd.*

Milton formed his description of the heavenly feast from the few words of Matt. iv. 11:—"And, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." Compare v. 587, &c. Let it be added, that a more pleasing commentary on the expression of the Evangelist could not have been penned.—TODD.

[z] It has been observed of almost all the great epic poems, that they fall off and become languid in the conclusion. This last book of the 'Paradise Regained' is one of the finest conclusions of a poem that can be produced. They who talk of our author's genius being in the decline when he wrote his second poem, and who therefore turn from it, as from a dry prosaic composition, are, I will venture to say, no judges of poetry. With a fancy such as Milton's, it must have been more difficult to forbear poetic decorations, than to furnish them; and a glaring profusion of ornament would, I conceive, have more decidedly betrayed the *poeta senescens*, than a want of it. The first book of the 'Paradise Lost' abounds in similes, and is, in other respects, as elevated and sublime as any in the whole poem: but here the poet's plan was totally different. Though it may be said of the 'Paradise Regained,' as Longinus has said of the Odyssey, that it is the epilogue of the preceding poem, still the design and conduct of it is as different as that of the Georgics from the Æneid. The 'Paradise Regained' has something of the didactic character: it teaches not merely by the general moral, and by the character and conduct of its hero; but has also many positive precepts everywhere interspersed. It is written for the most part in a style admirably condensed, and with a studied reserve of ornament: it is nevertheless illuminated with beauties of the most captivating kind. Its leading feature throughout is that "excellence of composition," which, as lord Monboddo justly observes, so eminently distinguished the writings of the ancients; and in which, of all modern authors, Milton most resembles them.

At the commencement of this book the argument of the poem is considerably advanced. Satan appears hopeless of success, but still persisting in his enterprise: the desperate folly and vain pertinacity of this conduct are perfectly well exemplified and illustrated by three apposite similes, each successively rising in beauty above the other. The business of the temptation being thus resumed, the tempter takes our Lord to the western side of the mountain, and shows to him Italy, the situation of which the poet marks with singular accuracy; and, having traced the Tiber from its source in the Apennines to Rome, he briefly enumerates the most conspicuous objects that may be supposed at first to strike the eye on a distant view of this celebrated city. Satan now becomes the speaker; and, in an admirably descriptive speech, points out more particularly the magnificent public and private buildings of ancient Rome, descanting on the splendour and power of its state, which he particularly exemplifies in the superb pomp with which their provincial magistrates proceed to their respective governments; and in the numerous ambassadors that arrive from every quarter of the habitable globe, to solicit the protection of Rome and the emperor. These are two pictures of the most highly finished kind: the numerous figures are in motion before us; we absolutely see

Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state,
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power,
Legions and cohorts, &c.

Having observed that such a power as this of Rome must reasonably be preferred to that of the Parthians, which he had displayed in the preceding book, and that there were no other powers worth our Lord's attention, the tempter now begins to apply all this to his purpose; by a strongly-drawn description of the vicious and detestable character of Tiberius, he shows how easy it would be to expel him, to take possession of his throne, and to free the Roman people from that slavery in which they were

then held. This he proffers to accomplish for our Lord, whom he incites to accept the offer, not only from a principle of ambition, but as the best means of securing to himself his promised inheritance, the throne of David. Our Lord, in reply, scarcely notices the arguments which Satan had been urging to him; and only takes occasion, from the description which had been given of the splendour and magnificence of Rome, to arraign the superlatively extravagant luxury of the Romans*, and briefly to sum up those vices and misconducts then rapidly advancing to their height, which soon brought on the decline, and in the end effectuated the fall, of the Roman power. The next object which our author had in view, in his proposed display of heathen excellence, was a scene of a different, but no less intoxicating kind: Athens, in all its pride of literature and philosophy; but he seems to have been well aware that an immediate transition, from the view of Rome to that of Athens, must have diminished the effect of each. The intermediate space he has finely occupied. Our Lord, unmoved by the splendid scene displayed to captivate him, and having only been led by it to notice the vices and corruptions of the heathen world, in the conclusion of his speech marks the vanity of all earthly power, by referring to his own future kingdom, as that which by supernatural means should destroy "all monarchies besides throughout the world."

The fiend hereupon, urged by the violence of his desperation to an indiscretion which he had not before showed, endeavours to enhance the value of his offers, by declaring that the only terms, on which he would bestow them, were those of our Lord's falling down and worshipping him. To this our Saviour answers in a speech of marked abhorrence blended with contempt. This draws from Satan a reply of as much art, and as finely written, as any in the poem; in which he endeavours, by an artful justification of himself, to repair the indiscretion of his blasphemous proposal, and to soften the effect of it on our blessed Lord, so far at least as to be enabled to resume the process of his enterprise. The transition, ver. 212, to his new ground of temptation, is peculiarly happy: having given up all prospect of working upon our Lord by the incitements of ambition, he now compliments him on his predilection for wisdom, and his early display of superior knowledge; and recommends it to him, for the purpose of accomplishing his professed design of reforming and converting mankind, to cultivate the literature and philosophy, for which the most polished part of the heathen world, and Greece in particular, was so eminent. This leads to his view of Athens; which is given, with singular effect, after the preceding dialogue; where the blasphemous rage of the tempter, and the art with which he endeavours to recover it, serve, by the variety of the subject and the interesting nature of the circumstance, materially to relieve the preceding and ensuing descriptions. The tempter, resuming his usual plausibility of language, now becomes the hierophant of the scene, which he describes, as he shows it, with so much accuracy, that we discern every object distinctly before us. The general view of Athens, with its most celebrated buildings and places of learned resort, is beautiful and original; and the description of its musicians, poets, orators, and philosophers is given with the hand of a master, and with all the fond affection of an enthusiast in Greek literature. Our Lord's reply is no less admirable; particularly where he displays the fallacy of the heathen philosophy, and points out the errors of its most admired sects with the greatest acuteness of argument, and at the same time in a noble strain of poetry. His contrasting the poetry and policy of the Hebrews with those of the Greeks, on the ground of what had been advanced by some learned men in this respect, is highly consistent with the argument of this poem; and is so far from originating in that fanaticism, with which some of his ablest commentators have chosen to brand our author, that it serves duly to counterbalance his preceding *éloge* on heathen literature. The next speech of the tempter, ver. 368, is one of those masterpieces of plain composition, for which Milton is so eminent: the sufferings of our blessed Lord are therein foretold with an energetic brevity, that on such subjects has an effect superior to the most flowery and decorated language. The dialogue here ceases for a short time. The poet, in his own person, now describes, ver. 394, &c., our Lord's being conveyed by Satan back to the wilderness, the storm which the tempter there raises, the tremendous night which our Lord passes, and the beautiful morning by which it

* Possibly not without a glance of the poet at the manners of our court at that time.

is succeeded. How exquisitely sublime and beautiful is all this!—Yet this is the poem, from which the ardent admirers of Milton's other works turn, as from a cold, uninteresting composition, the produce of his dotage, of a palsied hand, no longer able to hold the pencil of poetry! The dialogue which ensues is worthy of this book, and carries on the subject in the best manner to its concluding temptation. The last speech of Satan is particularly deserving our notice. The fiend, now "swoln with rage" at the repeated failure of his attacks, breaks out into a language of gross insult; professing to doubt whether our Lord, whom he had before frequently addressed as the Son of God, is in any way entitled to that appellation. From this wantonly blasphemous obloquy he still recovers himself, and offers, with his usual art, a qualification of what he had last said, and a justification of his persisting in farther attempts on the Divine person, by whom he had been so constantly foiled. These are the masterly discriminating touches, with which the poet has admirably drawn the character of the tempter: the general colouring is that of plausible hypocrisy, through which, when elicited by the sudden irritation of defeat, his diabolical malignity frequently flashes out, and displays itself with singular effect. We now come to the catastrophe of the poem. The tempter conveys our blessed Lord to the temple at Jerusalem, where the description of the holy city and of the temple is pleasingly drawn. Satan has now little to say; he brings the question to a decisive point, in which any persuasion of rhetorical language on his part can be of no avail; he therefore speaks in his own undisguised person and character, and his language accordingly is that of scornful insult. The result of the trial is given with the utmost brevity; and its consequences are admirably painted. The despair and fall of Satan, with its successive illustrations, ver. 562 to ver. 580, have all the boldness of Salvator Rosa; while the angels supporting our Lord "as on a floating couch, through the blithe air," is a sweetly pleasing and highly finished picture from the pencil of Guido. The refreshment ministered to our Lord by the angels is an intended and striking contrast to the luxurious banquet with which he had been tempted in the preceding part of the poem. The angelic hymn, which concludes the book, is at once poetical and scriptural: we may justly apply to it, and to this whole poem, an observation, which Fuller, in his "Worthies of Essex," first applied to Quarles; and which the ingenious Mr. Headley, in the "Biographical Sketches" prefixed to his "Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry," has transferred to the only poet to whom it is truly appropriate:—"To mix the waters of Jordan and Helicon in the same cup, was reserved for the hand of Milton; and for him, and him only, to find the bays of Mount Olivet equally verdant with those of Parnassus." It may farther be observed, that Milton is himself an eminent instance of one of his own observations in his 'Tractate of Education;' having practically demonstrated, what he invites the juvenile student in poetry theoretically to learn—"what religious, what glorious, and magnificent use might be made of poetry."—DUNSTER.

REMARKS ON MILTON'S VERSIFICATION.

DR. JOHNSON has written several pages on Milton's versification, which have been reprinted by Todd as an essay: the whole is written in Johnson's best manner; but I venture, however presumptuous it may appear, to assert that it is based on a theory wholly wrong. Johnson assumes, as many others have done, that the true heroic verse is the iambic; such as Dryden, Pope, and, I may add, Darwin, have brought to perfection; and that all variations from the iambic foot are irregularities, which may be pardonable for variety, but are still departures from the rule. Upon this ground, Milton is perpetually offending; and that which is among his primary beauties of metre is turned into a fault.

Let me be forgiven for my boldness in suggesting and exemplifying another theory of the great poet's versification, which I am convinced will be found a clew to the pronunciation of every part of his blank verse, and especially in 'Paradise Lost.'

I believe that Milton's principle was to introduce into his lines every variety of metrical foot which is to be found in the Latin poetry, especially in the lyrics of Horace; such as not merely iambic, but spondee, dactyl, trochee, anapest, &c.; and that whoever reads his lines as if they were prose, and accents them as the sense would dictate, will find that they fall into one, or rather several of these feet; often ending like the Latin, with a half-foot: wherever they do not, I doubt not that it arises from a different mode of accenting some word from that which was the usage in Milton's time. If there is any attempt to read Milton's verses as iambics, with a mere occasional variation of the trochee and the spondee, they will often sound very lame, instead of being, as they really are, magnificently harmonious.

If Johnson's rules are adopted, some of Milton's most tuneful lines become inharmonious; and, in the same degree, one of Cowley's, exquisite if properly scanned, but which Johnson exhibits as very faulty—

And the soft wings of peace cover him round;—

this, taken to be an iambic, is full of false quantities; but I assume the proper mode of scanning it to be this:—

And thĕ | sōft wĭngs | ŏf pēace | cōvĕr hĭm | round:

viz., first, a trochee; then a spondee; third, an iambic; fourth, a dactyl; fifth, a demi-foot. Thus Milton,

Partaken, and uncropt falls to the ground,

should be scanned thus:—

Părtā | kĕn, ănd | ŭncrōpt | fālls tŏ thĕ | grōund;

first, an iambic; second, an iambic; third, a spondee; fourth, a dactyl; fifth, a demi-foot.

Take the following:—

Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,

which I accent thus:

Of sĕnse, | whērebȳ | thēy hēar, | sēe, smēll, | tōūch, tāste.

first, an iambic; second, a spondee; third, an iambic; fourth, a spondee; fifth, a spondee.

The following lines, cited by Johnson, I scan thus:—

1. Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.
   Wīsdŏm tŏ | fōllȳ, ăs | nourīsh | mēnt tŏ | wind.

2. No ungrateful food, and food alike those pure.
   Nŏ ŭngrāte | fūl fōod, | ānd fōod | ălīke | thōse pūre.

3. For we have also our evening and our morn
   Fŏr wē | hāve ălsō | oūr ēve | nīng ănd | oūr mōrn.

4. Inhospitably, and kills their infant males.
   Inhōs | pītā | blȳ, ănd kīlls | thēir īn | fānt māles

5. And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth.
   And vī | tāl vīr | tūe Infūsed, | ănd vī | tāl wārmth.

6. God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
   Gōd māde | thēe ŏf chōice | hīs ōwn, | ănd ōf | hīs ōwn

7. Abominable, inutterable, and worse.
   Abŏ | mīnā | blĕ, inūt | tĕrā | ble, ănd | wōrse

8. Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire.
   Impē | nĕtrā | ble, īm | pāled wīth | cīrclīng | fire.

9. To none communicable in earth or heaven.
   Tŏ nōne | cōmmū | nīcā | blĕ īn eārth | or heāven.

10. In curls on either cheek play'd: wings he wore.
    In cūrls | ŏn ei | thĕr chēek | plāy'd: wīngs | hĕ wōre.

11. Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood.
    Līes thrōugh | thĕ pĕrplex'd | pāths ŏf | thīs drēar | wood.

12. On him, who had stole Jove's authentick fire.
    On hīm | who hăd | stōle Jōve's | aūthēn | tīck fīre.

13. Universal reproach, far worse to bear.
    Unīvēr | sāl rē | prōach, fār | wōrse tŏ | beār.

14. With them from bliss to the bottomless deep
    With thēm | frōm blīss | tŏ thĕ | bōttŏmlĕss | dēep

15. Present? thus to his son audibly spake.
    Prĕsĕnt? | thūs tŏ | hīs sōn | aūdiblȳ | spāke.

16. Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart.
    Thȳ līn | gĕrīng, ōr | wīth ōne | strōke ŏf | thīs dārt.

17. To do aught good never will be our task.
    Tŏ dō | aūght goōd | nĕvĕr wīll | bē ōur | tāsk.

18. Created hugest, that swim the ocean stream.
    Crĕā | tĕd hūgĕst, | thăt swīm | thĕ ō | ceăn streām.

19. Came singly where he stood on the bare strand.
    Cāme sīng | lȳ whēre | hĕ stōod | ōn thĕ bāre | strānd.

20. Light from above, from the fountain of light.
Līght frŏm | ăbōve, | frŏm thĕ | foūntăin ŏf | līght.

21. Things not reveal'd, which the invisible king.
Thīngs nŏt | rĕveāl'd, | whīch thĕ | invīsĭ|blĕ kīng.

22. With their bright luminaries, that set and rose.
Wĭth theīr | brīght lū|mĭnă|riĕs thăt sĕt | ănd rōse.

Dr. Johnson, assuming the iambic to be the true heroic measure of English poetry, says that Milton has seldom two pure lines together. So far from it, he has a long succession of lines in every book of unbroken harmony, if we allow the variety of feet which he undoubtedly adopted as a system. The critic's false principle of our verse continually leads him to blame as faulty what in truth is harmonious: thus, having said that the elision of one vowel before another beginning the next word is contrary to the genius of our language, he is often driven to make this elision by his false rule; as in this line,

Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.

Here he cuts off the last syllable of "folly" before "as:" but the verse properly scanned, does not require it to be cut off:—

Wīsdŏm | tŏ fŏl|lȳ, ăs nōu|rīshmĕnt | tŏ wīnd.

All that Johnson says, as to the principle to be adopted on varying the pauses in parts of a verse, or of two or more verses taken together, seems to be whimsical and unfounded; but if true, would go to render faulty what is the real spell of Milton's sonorous variety of harmony. He asserts that there can be no metrical harmony in a succession of less than three syllables, and that every pause ought in itself to have metrical harmony; and therefore that the pause on a monosyllable at the commencement of a line is bad. This would condemn some of Milton's most musical lines. The truth is, that Milton's paragraphs contain a succession of varied pauses "linked together" with the most perfect skill; and in not one of the places, where they are censured by the critic, are they any other than beautiful or grand. In almost every case, the sense demands that we should lay the accent where the metre demands it, unless we insist upon pure iambics.

That I may not be considered unjust to Johnson, I cite a specimen of his remarks in his own words:—"When a single syllable is cut off from the rest, it must either be united to the line with which the sense connects it, or sounded alone: if it be united to the other line, it corrupts its harmony; if disjointed, it must stand alone, and with regard to music, be superfluous; for there is no harmony in a single sound, because it has no proportion to another:"—

Hypocrites austerely talk,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure; and commands to some, leaves free to all.

Here the emphatic word "pure"* derives double force from its position. The other passages next cited by Johnson are pre-eminently beautiful. I am utterly astonished at Johnson's want of ear and of taste on this occasion.

Todd very justly says, that "the fineness of Milton's pauses, and flow of his verses into each other, eminently appears in the very entrance of his 'Paradise Lost,'

* Todd has cited an excellent observation, contrary to this, from T. Sheridan's "Lectures on the Art of Reading," vol. ii. p. 258.

in the first lines of which, the same numbers, in every respect, are hardly once repeated; as Mr. Say has observed in his 'Remarks on the Numbers of Paradise Lost,' 1745, p. 126."

But as Johnson can never write long without writing some things justly and powerfully, I cannot refrain from citing the following passages:—

"It has been long observed, that the idea of beauty is vague and undefined, different in different minds, and diversified by time and place," &c.

"It is in many cases apparent that this quality is merely relative and comparative; that we pronounce things beautiful, because they have something, which we agree, for whatever reason, to call beauty, in a greater degree than we have been accustomed to find it in other things of the same kind; and that we transfer the epithet as our knowledge increases, and appropriate it to higher excellence, when higher excellence comes within our view. Much of the beauty of writing is of this kind; and therefore Boileau justly remarks, that the books which have stood the test of time, and been admired through all the changes which the mind of man has suffered, from the various evolutions of knowledge, and the prevalence of contrary customs, have a better claim to our regard than any modern can boast; because the long continuance of their reputation proves that they are adequate to our faculties and agreeable to nature.

"It is, however, the task of criticism to establish principles; to improve opinion into knowledge; and to distinguish those means of pleasing which depend upon known causes and rational deduction, from the nameless and inexplicable elegances which appeal wholly to the fancy; from which we feel delight, but know not how they produce it; and which may well be termed the enchantresses of the soul. Criticism reduces those regions of literature under the dominion of science, which have hitherto known only the anarchy of ignorance, the caprices of fancy, and the tyranny of prescription."

Johnson, no doubt, did right in endeavouring to establish principles and rules with regard to versification; but wrong principles do more harm than none at all. Either Johnson is on this subject wrong, or Milton is a very bad versifier: I do not think that any man of taste, or a tolerable ear, will in these days adopt the latter opinion: I do not believe that any one will endure the monotony of the pure iambic couplet carried beyond twenty or thirty lines. The occasional intermixture of the metrical feet of the ancients, judiciously applied, distinguishes Milton's blank verse from all other in our language. Iambic blank verse, or that which approaches to iambic, or even a mixed spondaic, wants all its force and diversity; or often becomes languid and diffuse, without the variety of musical prose.

As Milton's style is always condensed and full of matter, it may be said to have a tendency to harshness; for there is no doubt that our language is too much loaded with consonants, especially in our nouns and verbs: but if properly pronounced, there is no poetical author who has more sonorous or soft verses. At the same time, it must be admitted, that he has less fluency than Shakspeare, or even Spenser; but certainly more nerve and strength than either of them. Shakspeare has a more idiomatic combination of words, with a simple, beautiful, and spell-like colloquiality: Milton's combinations are new, learned, and often, perhaps too often, latinised: he is never trite: his mind always appears in full tension, and apart from the vulgar and the light.

SAMSON AGONISTES*:

A Dramatick Poem.

Τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, κ. τ. λ

ARISTOT. "Poet.," cap. 6

Tragœdia est imitatio actionis seriæ, &c., per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE excellence of this drama, which strictly follows the Greek model, lies principally in its majestic moral strength: the two preceding poems are divine epics; this deals entirely in topics of human nature and human manners. It is not adapted to exhibition on the stage: it is too didactic; and has too few actors and too few incidents. The fable, the characters, the sentiments, and the language are all admirably preserved: the story does not linger, as some have pretended; but goes forward with intense interest to the end. The opening is in the chastest style of poetical beauty. "The breath of heaven fresh blowing" gives ease to Samson's body, but not to his mind, which, when in solitude and at leisure, agonises his heart with regrets. Nothing can be more pathetic than the comparison of his present fallen state with his early hopes and past glories; and then the reflection that for this change he had no one to blame but himself.—

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind amongst enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eased, &c

The observations of the Chorus, descriptive of Samson's dejected appearance in this situation, are very fine, contrasted with the recollection of his former mighty actions and triumphs:—

O mirrour of our fickle state,
Since man on earth unparallel'd,
The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.

The dialogues between Samson and his father are everywhere supported with force, elevation, and moral wisdom; and the unexampled simplicity of the language in which they are conveyed augments the deep impression which they everywhere make.

Perhaps, as a summary of divine dispensations, nothing even in Milton can be found so awful and comprehensive.

* *Samson Agonistes.*

That is, Samson an actor; Samson, being represented in a play. Agonistes, ludio, histrio, actor, scenicus.—NEWTON.

Agonistes is here rather *athleta*. The subject of the drama is Samson brought forth to exhibit his athletic powers. See ver. 1314. That such was Milton's intended sense of "Agonistes," may farther be collected from his use of the word "Antagonist," ver. 1628.—DUNSTER.

Then bursts forth, at verse 667, that complaint of most deep and stupendous eloquence, beginning,—

God of our fathers, what is man!

Then enters Dalila, with the renewal of all her arts, and coquetries, and false smiles. With what a proud and overwhelming scorn does the hero treat her insidious advances! what a contrast is Dalila to Eve, even when, like Eve to Adam, she affects to own her transgression! Samson exclaims, v. 748:—

Out, out, hyæna! these are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,
And reconcilement move with feign'd remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change;
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men full oft beguiled,
With goodness principled not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangled with a poisonous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.

As the dialogue goes on, each party speaks in that natural train which leads to the consummation of the tragedy; and with poetic force and plenitude of rich sentiment, which belong to Milton alone.

All poetry of a high order is produced by a union of all the best faculties of the mind, and all the noblest emotions of the heart. What is called the understanding, or reason, alone, will produce no poetry at all: even the imagination added to it will not be sufficient, unless there be sentiment and pathos raised by what that imagination presents. To supply the materials of that imagination, there must be observation, knowledge, learning, and memory. In the amalgamation of all these Milton's drama excels.

The character of Samson Agonistes is magnificently supported: he speaks always in a tone becoming his circumstances, his position, his sufferings, and his destiny: everything is grand, animated, natural, and soul-elating.

It is a minor sort of poetry to relate things as a stander-by: the author must throw himself into the character of the person represented, and speak in his name. Pope, in his characters of men and women, tells us their several opinions and passions; but these opinions and passions should be uttered by themselves. There is a sympathy we feel with the eloquent relater of his own sorrows, which cannot be raised by the relation of a third person.

The character of Manoah, Samson's father, is full of nature and parental affection.

The Chorus is everywhere attractive by poetry, moral wisdom, and eloquent pathos. I will not disguise my opinion, that the versification of these lyrical parts is occasionally, and only occasionally, inharmonious, abrupt, and harsh; and such as my ear can scarcely reconcile to any sort of metre.

The sudden presage which prompted Samson to consent to exhibit himself in the theatre, after the stern reluctance he had previously expressed, is very sublime. The tone of the whole drama is in the highest degree of elevation: the thoughts, sentiments, and words are those of a mental giant.

Added to the mighty interest which these create, is the conviction that through the whole the poet has a relation to his own case;—his blindness, his proscription, his poverty,

With darkness, and with danger compass'd round;—

his fortitude, his defiance, his unimpaired strength, his loftiness of soul, his conscious power from the vastness of his intellect, and the firmness of his principles.

OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATICK POEM WHICH IS CALLED TRAGEDY[a].

[WRITTEN BY MILTON HIMSELF.]

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terrour, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion: for so, in physick[b], things of melancholick hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours: hence philosophers, and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragick poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides[c] into the text of Holy Scriptures, 1 Cor xv. 33; and Paræus, commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts distinguished each by a chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in

[a] *Of that sort of dramatick poem called Tragedy.*

Milton, who was inclined to puritanism, had good reason to think that the publication of his 'Samson Agonistes' would be very offensive to his brethren, who held poetry, and particularly that of the dramatic kind, in the greatest abhorrence: and, upon this account, it is probable, that, in order to excuse himself from having engaged in this proscribed and forbidden species of writing, he thought it expedient to prefix to his play a formal defence of tragedy.—T. WARTON.

[b] *For so, in physick, &c.*

These expressions of Milton may be supposed to refer to the doctrine of signatures then in vogue; which had been introduced by Paracelsus between the years 1530 and 1540, and which inferred the propriety of the use of any vegetable or mineral in medicine, from the similarity of colour, shape, or appearance, which these remedies might bear to the part affected. Thus yellow things, as saffron, turmeric, &c., were given in liver complaints, from their analogy of colour to the bile; and other remedies were given in nephritic disorders, because the seed or leaf of the plant resembled the kidney. See Paracelsus, "Labyrinth. Med." c. 8, and Dr. Pemberton's very elegant Preface to the English edition of the "London Dispensary."—DUNSTER.

[c] *A verse of Euripides.*

The verse, here quoted, is "Evil communications corrupt good manners;" but I am inclined to think that Milton is mistaken in calling it a verse of Euripides; for Jerome and Grotius (who published the fragments of Menander), and the best commentators, ancient and modern, say that it is taken from the "Thais" of Menander, and it is extant among the fragments of Menander, p. 79, Le Clerc's edit. Such slips of memory may be found sometimes in the best writers.—NEWTON.

Mr. Glasse, the learned translator of this tragedy into Greek iambics, agrees with Dr. Newton. Dr Macknight, in his excellent "Translation of the Epistles," is of opinion, that the sentiment is of elder date than the time of Menander; that it was one of the proverbial verses commonly received among the Greeks, the author of which cannot now be known. Clemens Alexandrinus calls it a tragic iambic, "Strom." lib. i., and Socrates the historian expressly assigns it to Euripides, "Ecc. Hist." lib. iii. cap. 16, ed. Vales. p. 189. It is extant indeed in the fragments of Euripides, as well as in those of the comic writer. Milton therefore is not to be charged with forgetfulness or mistake.—TODD.

highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy; of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious, than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæsar also had begun his Ajax; but, unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca, the philosopher, is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a father of the church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy[d], which is entitled "Christ Suffering." This is mentioned to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes; happening through the poet's errour of intermixing comick stuff with tragick sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient tragedy use no prologue[e], yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an epistle; in behalf of this tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much beforehand may be epistled; that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks monostrophick, or rather apolelymenon[f], without regard had to strophe, antistrophe, or epode, which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the musick, then used with the Chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called allæostropha. Division into act and scene referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended), is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such œconomy, or disposition of the fable, as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum; they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragick poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is, according to ancient rule and best example, within the space of twenty-four hours.

[d] *A tragedy, &c.*

A very severe, but very just criticism, on this tragedy of Gregory, which has been too much applauded.—Jos. Warton.

[e] *Though ancient tragedy use no prologue.*

That is, no prologue apologising for the poet, as we find the ancient comedy did. See Terence's prologues.—Hurd.

[f] *Apolelymenon.*

Free from the restraint of any particular measure, not from all measure whatsoever.—Hurd.

ARGUMENT.

SAMSON, made captive, blind,* and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common work-house, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition; where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his own father Manoah, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoah then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistine lords for Samson's redemption; who in the mean while is visited by other persons, and lastly by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence; he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him: the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoah returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance: in the midst of which discourse a Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

THE PERSONS.

SAMSON.
MANOAH, *the Father of Samson.*
DALILA, *his Wife.*
HARAPHA, *of Gath.*
Publick Officer.
Messenger.
Chorus of Danites.

The Scene before the Prison in Gaza.

* *Samson, made captive, blind, &c.*

Mr. Upton is the first critic who has observed, what yet is obvious, that in this tragedy Samson "imprisoned and blind, and the captive state of Israel, livelily represent our blind poet with the republican party, after the Restoration, afflicted and persecuted." See his "Crit. Observ. on Shakspeare," 1748, p. 144. I must add, that Milton, who artfully envelops much of his own history and of the times in this drama, had long before used the character and situation of Samson for a temporary allegory in 'The Reason of Church Government,' b. ii. conclusion. He supposes Samson to be a king, who, being disciplined in temperance, grows perfect in strength, his illustrious and sunny locks being the laws: while these are undiminished and unshorn, with the jaw-bone of an ass, that is, with the word of his meanest officer, he defeats thousands of his adversaries: but, reclining his head on the lap of flattering prelates, while he sleeps, they cut off those bright tresses of his laws and prerogatives, once his ornament and defence, delivering him over to violent and oppressive counsellors; who, like the Philistines, extinguish the eyes of his natural discernment, forcing him to grind in the prison-house of their insidious designs against his power: "till he, knowing this prelatical razor to have bereft him of his wonted might, nourish again his puissant hair, the golden beams of law and right; and they, sternly shook, thunder with ruin upon the heads of those his evil counsellors, but not without great affliction to himself."—T. WARTON.

The younger Richardson, in his manuscript observations on this tragedy, has noticed the allusions of the poet to the history of himself and of his own days. "The poem," he remarks, "was written when the saints were oppressed, and in little appearance of ever seeing their own times again: therefore the conclusion is with a view to comfort them, as well as himself, by so great an example of Providence, 'Aye watching o'er his saints with eye unseene,' as he writes on the glass window at Chalfont. This Milton loves to allude to in all his writings, and is the great moral of this tragedy, as Mr. Pope observed to me: and considering this point farther some days afterwards, I am persuaded Milton must have a view to himself in Samson."—TODD.

SAMSON (Attendant *leading him*).

A LITTLE onward[a] lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps[b], a little further on:
For yonder bank[c] hath choice of sun or shade:
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoin'd me,
Where I, a prisoner, chain'd, scarce freely draw
The air imprison'd also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught: but here I feel amends,
The breath of heaven[d] fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.—
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon their sea-idol[e], and forbid
Laborious works; unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me; hence with leave
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging[f], and present

[a] *A little onward, &c.*

Milton, after the example of the Greek tragedians, whom he professes to imitate, opens his drama with introducing one of its principal personages, explaining the story upon which it is founded.—THYER.

The incident, however, and the formulary of the expression, are from the Hecuba of Euripides, who thus leads on the giant sorrows of Priam's aged queen:—

HEC. Lead me, ye Trojan dames, a little onward,
A little onward lead an aged matron,
Now your poor fellow-slave, but once your queen.

[b] *To these dark steps.*

So Tiresias in Euripides, "Phœnissæ," ver. 841.—RICHARDSON.

The words of this opening are very poetical, beautiful, and affecting.

[c] *For yonder bank.*

The scene of this tragedy is much the same as that of the Œdipus Coloneus in Sophocles, where blind Œdipus is conducted in like manner, and represented sitting upon a little hill near Athens: but yet I think there is scarcely a single thought the same in the two pieces; and I am sure the Greek tragedy can have no pretence to be esteemed better, but only because it is two thousand years older.—NEWTON.

[d] *The breath of heaven.*

This line and the next are exquisite.

[e] *To Dagon their sea-idol.*

Milton, as Dr. Newton observes, both here and in the 'Paradise Lost,' follows the opinion of those who describe this idol as part man, part fish, b. i. 462. Some also describe the idol as part woman and part fish:

Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne,

according to Calmet.—TODD.

[f] *But rush upon me thronging.*

The whole of this passage is pathetic, moral, and full of force.

Times past, what once I was, and what am now[g].
O, wherefore was my birth from heaven foretold
Twice by an angel[h], who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an offering burned,
As in a fiery column charioting
His godlike presence, and from some great act
Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding order'd and prescribed
As of a person separate to God,
Design'd for great exploits; if I must die
Betray'd, captived, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;
To grind in brazen fetters under task
With this heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength,
Put to the labour of a beast, debased
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was, that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver:
Ask for this great deliverer now[i], and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke:
Yet stay; let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction: what if all foretold
Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,
Whom have I to complain of but myself?
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
O'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body strong!
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom[j]? vast, unwieldy, burdensome,

[g] *What once I was, and what am now.*

As in 'Paradise Lost,' book iv. 23:—

Now conscience wakes despair
That slumber'd, wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is.—TODD.

[h] *Twice by an angel.*

Once to his mother, and again to his father Manoah and his mother both; and the second time the angel ascended in the flame of the altar, Judges xiii. 3, 11, 20.—NEWTON.

[i] *Ask for this great deliverer now, &c.*

This may be considered as political, referring to the prospects there were, not long before, of the republican party overturning monarchy; and to that lately victorious party being now completely itself overcome, and subject to the yoke which it had once apparently removed and trampled on.—DUNSTER.

[j] *But what is strength without a double share*
Of wisdom? &c.

Ovid. Met. xiii. 363:—

Tu vires sine mente geris ——
—————— tu tantum corpore prodes,
Nos animo: quantoque ratem qui temperat, &c.—JORTIN.

Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties; not made to rule,
But to subserve where wisdom bears command!
God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace, I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know:
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries;
So many, and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail; but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eased,
Inferiour to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me:
They creep, yet see; I, dark in night, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half[k].
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,

And Horace, "Od." III. iv. 65:—

Vis consili expers mole ruit sua.—Richardson.

[k] *Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.*

In these lines the poet seems to paint himself. The litigation of his will produced a collection of evidence relating to the testator, which renders the discovery of those long-forgotten papers peculiarly interesting: they show very forcibly, and in new points of view, his domestic infelicity, and his amiable disposition. The tender and sublime poet, whose sensibility and sufferings were so great, appears to have been almost as unfortunate in his daughters as the Lear of Shakspeare. A servant declares in evidence, that her deceased master, a little before his last marriage, had lamented to her the ingratitude and cruelty of his children: he complained that they combined to defraud him in the economy of his house, and sold several of his books in the basest manner. His feelings on such an outrage, both as a parent and scholar, must have been singularly painful: perhaps they suggested to him these very pathetic lines.—Hayley.

As it appears, from the latest discoveries relating to the domestic life of Milton, that his wife was particularly attentive to him, and treated his infirmities with much tenderness, this passage seems to restrict the time when this drama was written to a period previous to his last marriage, or at least nearly to that immediate time, while the singular ill-treatment of his daughters was fresh in his memory. This also coincides with what Mr. Hayley has observed respecting its being written immediately after the execution of Sir Henry Vane, which took place June 14, 1662. Milton was then in his fifty-fourth year, in which we are told he married his third wife. This would make the 'Agonistes' at least three years anterior to the 'Paradise Regained,' of which we know he had not thought previous to the summer of 1665; when, on account of the plague raging in London, he retired to Chalfont, where an accidental expression of Elwood, on returning him the copy of 'Paradise Lost,' laid the foundation of the second poem.—Dunster.

Irrecoverably dark[l], total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first-created Beam, and thou great Word,
"Let there be light, and light was over all;"
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon[m],
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,
So obvious and so easy to be quench'd?
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but, O yet more miserable!
My self my sepulchre, a moving grave;
Buried, yet not exempt,
By privilege of death and burial,
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs;
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes.
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet[n] steering this way[o];

[l] *O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,*
Irrecoverably dark.

This is far more pathetic than the exclamation of Œdipus, which the poet perhaps had now in mind, "Œd. Tyr." v. 1337.—TODD.

Few passages in poetry are so affecting as this; and the tone of expression is peculiarly Miltonic.

[m] *And silent as the moon.*

"Silens luna" is the moon at or near the change, and in conjunction with the sun. Plin. lib. xvi. cap. 39. The interlunar cave is here called "vacant," "quia luna ibi vacat opere et ministerio suo;" because the moon is idle and useless, and makes no return of light.—MEADOWCOURT.

There is very extraordinary power of poetry in the whole passage, down to verse 109.

[n] *With joint pace I hear*
The tread of many feet.

Virgil, Æn. ii. 731:—

subito cum creber ad aures
Visus adesse pedum sonitus.—TODD.

[o] *Steering this way.*

If this be the right reading, the metaphor is extremely hard and abrupt. A common man would have said "bearing this way."—WARBURTON.

I believe "steering" is the right reading. So, in the 'Ode on the Nativ.' ver. 146:—

With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering.

Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare
At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,
Their daily practice to afflict me more.

Enter Chorus.

Cho. This, this is he; softly awhile;
Let us not break in upon him:
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused[p],
With languish'd head unpropp'd,
As one past hope abandon'd,
And by himself given over;
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'erworn and soil'd;
Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
That heroick, that renown'd,
Irresistible Samson? whom unarm'd
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could withstand;
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid;
Ran on embattel'd armies clad in iron;
And, weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous[q], useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd cuirass,
Chalybean temper'd steel[r], and frock of mail
Adamantëan proof?
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanced[s],
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite[t]
Fled from his lion ramp[u]; old warriours turn'd

The old writers use it simply for moving. Thus Chaucer, in "The Flower and the Leaf:"—

Stering so fast, that all the earth trembled.—HURD.

[p] *Carelessly diffused.*

This beautiful application of the word "diffused" Milton has borrowed from the Latins. So Ovid, "Ex Ponto," III. iii. 7:—

Publica me requies curarum somnus habebat,
Fusaque erant toto languida membra toro.—THYER.

[q] *Made arms ridiculous.*

This, it must be admitted, is prosaic.

[r] *Chalybean temper'd steel.*

That is, the best tempered steel by the Chalybes, who were famous among the ancients for their iron works. Virg. Georg. i. 58—"At Chalybes nudi ferrum."—NEWTON.

[s] *When insupportably his foot advanced.*

For this nervous expression Milton was probably indebted to the following lines of Spenser, "Faery Queen," I. vii. 11:—

That when the knight he spied, he 'gan advance
With huge force, and insupportable main.—THYER.

[t] *The bold Ascalonite.*

The inhabitant of Ascalon, one of the five principal cities of the Philistines, mentioned 1 Sam. vi. 17.—NEWTON.

[u] *His lion ramp.*

His attack like that of a lion rampant. "Rampant" is an heraldic term.—T. WARTON.

Their plated backs[v] under his heel;
Or, groveling, soil'd their crested helmets[w] in the dust.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day[x].
Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders bore
The gates of Azza[y], post, and massy bar,
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old[z],
No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so;
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up heaven.
Which shall I first bewail,
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark?
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain),
Imprison'd now indeed,
In real darkness of the body dwells[a],
Shut up from outward light
To incorporate with gloomy night;
For inward light, alas!

[v] *Old warriours turn'd*
Their plated backs, &c.

The deeds of valorous knights were now in Milton's mind. Artegall is thus described, "like a lion:"—

Hewing and slashing shields and helmets bright,
And beating downe whatever nigh him came,
That every one 'gan shun his dreadful sight,
No lesse than Death, &c.—"Faer. Qu." IV. iv. 41.

See a similar account of Marinell, "Faer. Qu." v. iii. 8.—TODD.

[w] *Crested helmets.*

"Galeæ cristatæ quæ speciem magnitudini corporum adderent," Liv. ix. 40: and Ovid, Met. viii. 25—"Cristata casside."—DUNSTER.

[x] *In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day.*

Judges xv. 17—"He cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi," that is, "the lifting up of the jawbone, or casting away of the jawbone," as it is rendered in the margin of our Bibles.—NEWTON.

[y] *The gates of Azza.*

Another name for Gaza. Sandys, speaking of this city, says, "*Gaza* or *Aza* signifieth *strong:* in the Persian language, *a treasury.*" Travels, fol. 1615, p. 149.—TODD.

[z] *Hebron, seat of giants old.*

For Hebron was the city of Arba, the father of Anak, and the seat of the Anakims, Josh. xv. 13, 14. And the Anakims were giants, which come of the giants, Numb. xiii. 33.—NEWTON.

[a] *Imprison'd now indeed,*
In real darkness of the body dwells.

Perhaps an allusion to Matt. vi. 23—"If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" So, in 'Comus:'—

He, that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.—TODD.

Puts forth no visual beam [b].
O mirrour of our fickle state [c]!
Since man on earth unparallel'd,
The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.
For him I reckon not in high estate,
Whom long descent of birth [d],
Or the sphere of fortune [e] raises;
But thee, whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
Might have subdued the earth,
Universally crown'd with highest praises [f].
Sam. I hear the sound of words; their sense the air
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.
Cho. He speaks: let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,
The glory late of Israel, now the grief;
We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown,
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale [g],
To visit or bewail thee [h]; or, if better,
Counsel or consolation we may bring,
Salve to thy sores: apt words have power to swage
The tumours of a troubled mind,
And are as balm to fester'd wounds.
Sam. Your coming, friends, revives me: for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,

[b] *For inward light, alas!*
Puts forth no visual beam.

The expression is fine, and means the ray of light which occasions vision.—WARBURTON.

[c] *O mirrour of our fickle state, &c.*

There is a fine resemblance in the remainder of these pathetic reflections to those of the Chorus, on the fate of Œdipus Tyrannus, in the play of that name, by Sophocles, v. 1211.—TODD.

[d] *Long descent of birth.*

Juv. Sat. viii. 1:—

quid prodest, Pontice, longo
Sanguine censeri?—TODD.

[e] *Or the sphere of fortune.*

Fortune is painted on a globe, which by her influence is in a perpetual rotation on its axis.—WARBURTON.

[f] *Highest praises.*

Though there are magnificent passages in this Chorus, I cannot quite reconcile my ear to the rhythm; nor to some of the expressions, which are, I confess, too like prose.

[g] *From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale.*

These were two towns of the tribe of Dan, Josh. xix. 41; the latter the birthplace of Samson, Judg. xiii. 2; and they were near one another. "And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zora and Eshtaol," Judg. xiii. 25. And they were both situated in the valley, Josh. xv. 33; and therefore the poet with great exactness says "Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale."—NEWTON.

[h] *To visit or bewail thee.*

The poet dictated "to visit and bewail thee:" the purpose of their visit was to bewail him; or, if better (that is, if they found it more proper), to advise or comfort him.—CALTON.

How counterfeit a coin[i] they are who friends
Bear in their superscription (of the most
I would be understood): in prosperous days[j]
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
How many evils have inclosed me round;
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me[k],
Blindness; for had I sight, confused with shame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwreck'd
My vessel[l] trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigg'd; and for a word, a tear,
Fool! have divulged the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman? tell me, friends,
Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool
In every street? do they not say, how well
Are come upon him his deserts? yet why?
Immeasurable strength they might behold

[i] *How counterfeit a coin, &c.*

The groundwork of this passage is perhaps the following in the "Mirrour for Magistrates:"—

A golden treasure is the tried friend;
But who may gold from counterfeits defend?

Or in Shakspeare's "Two Gentlemen of Verona," a. v. s. 4: "Thou counterfeit to thy true friend!"—DUNSTER.

[j] *In prosperous days.*

See Gray's "Hymn to Adversity:"—

Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer friend, &c.

[k] *Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me.*

There is no inconsistence in this with what he said before, ver. 66:—

But chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain.

When he was by himself, he considered his blindness as the worst of evils; but now, upon his friends coming in and seeing him in this wretched condition, it "least afflicts me," says he; as being some cover to his shame and confusion.—NEWTON.

[l] *Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwreck'd*
My vessel, &c.

Dr. Johnson observes, that "metaphors sometimes find admission where their consistency is not accurately preserved. Thus," he adds, with a reference to this passage, "Samson confounds loquacity with a shipwreck." Surely this is not criticising very accurately. The fact is, Samson ascribes his own ruin, or shipwreck, to a very natural cause, his own indiscretion. The Greek writers use "to suffer shipwreck" in a metaphorical sense. It is particularly thus used by St. Paul for shipwreck or the most fatal ruin, when caused immediately by misconduct: "Holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." In the "Table of Cebes," it is said of foolish and wicked men, "they suffer shipwreck in life." Compare Spenser's description of those who are wrecked on the rock of vile reproach; and who,

Having all their substance spent
In wanton ioyes and lust intemperate,
Did afterwards make shipwrack violent
Both of their life and fame, &c.—"Faer. Qu." II. xii. 7.

It may be observed also, that St. James compares the tongue to the helm of a ship, ch. iii. 4, and that Samson suffered all he had undergone in consequence of not duly governing his tongue. The metaphor then is so far also scriptural.—DUNSTER.

In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean:
This with the other should, at least, have pair'd;
These two, proportion'd ill, drove me transverse.
Cho. Tax not divine disposal; wisest men
Have err'd, and by bad women been deceived;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides:
Yet, truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.
Sam. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased
Me, not my parents [m], that I sought to wed
The daughter of an infidel: they knew not
That what I motion'd was of God; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urged
The marriage on; that by occasion hence
I might begin Israel's deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely [n] call'd.
She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O, that I never had! fond wish too late)
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,
That specious monster [o], my accomplish'd snare [p].

[m] *The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased*
Me, not my parents, &c.

None of the critics have observed that Milton here alludes to some of the particulars of his first match. The Chorus had just before remarked:—

I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair.

To say nothing of the dissatisfaction Milton's first wife had conceived at her husband's unsocial and philosophical system of life, so different from the convivial cheerfulness and plenty of her father's family, it is probable that the quarrel was owing to party, which also might operate mutually; but when Cromwell's faction proved victorious, her father, who had taken a very forward part in assisting the king during the siege of Oxford, finding his affairs falling into distress, for prudential reasons, strove to bring about an agreement between the separated couple: and thus the reconciliation was interested; nor was it effected but by her unsolicited and apparently humble submission, and after the most earnest entreaties, which the husband for some time resisted: on the whole, therefore, we may suppose that not much real or uninterrupted cordiality followed; and I think it clear that Milton's own experience, in the course of this marriage, furnished the substance of the sentiments in another speech of Samson, ver. 750 to 763. Phillips says that Milton was inclined to pardon his repudiated bride, "partly from his own generous nature, more inclinable to reconciliation than to perseverance in anger and revenge."—T. Warton.

[n] *Divinely.*

Lat. "divinitus."—Richardson.

[o] *That specious monster.*

In the Latin sense of specious; handsome, captivating. The whole expression seems to refer to the Echidna of Hesiod.—Dunster.

[p] *My accomplish'd snare.*

There seems to be a quibble in the use of this epithet.—Warburton.
It rather appears to be irony.—J. Warton.

I thought it lawful from my former act,
And the same end; still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressours: of what now I suffer
She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
Who, vanquish'd with a peal of words (O, weakness!),
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.
Cho. In seeking just occasion to provoke
The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:
Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.
Sam. That fault [q] I take not on me, but transfer
On Israel's governours and heads of tribes,
Who, seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerours,
Acknowledged not, or not at all consider'd,
Deliverance offer'd: I, on the other side,
Used no ambition [r] to commend my deeds;
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer:
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their lords the Philistines with gather'd powers
Enter'd Judea seeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of Etham [s] was retired;
Not flying, but forecasting in what place
To set upon them, what advantaged best:
Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent
The harass of their land, beset me round:
I willingly on some conditions came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me,
To the uncircumcised a welcome prey,
Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threads
Touch'd with the flame: on their whole host I flew
Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd
Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.
Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possess'd the towers of Gath,

[q] *That fault, &c.*

Milton certainly intended to reproach his countrymen indirectly, and as plainly as he dared, with the restoration of Charles II. (which he accounted the restoration of slavery), and with the execution of the regicides. He pursues the same subject again, ver. 678 to ver. 700. I wonder how the licensers of those days let it pass.—JORTIN.

It is the more to be wondered at, as some passages in his 'History of England,' containing indirect remarks on his country, were struck out by the licenser, in the same year. They were afterwards printed in a quarto pamphlet, in 1681; and, in the edition of his 'Prose Works,' in 1738, are admitted into their place in the third book of his History.—TODD.

[r] *Used no ambition.*

"Going about with studiousness and affectation to gain praise," as Mr. Richardson says; alluding to the origin of the word in Latin.—NEWTON.

[s] *Safe to the rock of Etham, &c.*

Judges xv. 8.—NEWTON.

And lorded over them whom now they serve:
But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt[t],
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty,
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect
Whom God hath of his special favour raised
As their deliverer? if he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him[u], and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?
Cho. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel[v]
Their great deliverer contemn'd,
The matchless Gideon, in pursuit
Of Midian and her vanquish'd kings:
And how ingrateful Ephraim[w]
Had dealt with Jephthah, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear,
Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
Had not his prowess quell'd their pride
In that sore battel, when so many died
Without reprieve, adjudged to death,
For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth.
Sam. Of such examples add me to the roll;
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's proposed deliverance not so.

[t] *But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt, &c.*

Here Mr. Thyer has anticipated me, by observing that Milton is very uniform, as well as just, in his notions of liberty; always attributing the loss of it to vice and corruption of morals: but in this passage he very probably intended also a secret satire upon the English nation, which, according to his republican politics, had, by restoring the king, chosen "bondage with ease" rather than "strenuous liberty." And let me add, that the sentiment is very like that of Æmilius Lepidus the consul, in his oration to the Roman people against Sulla, preserved among the fragments of Sallust:—"Annuite legibus impositis; accipite otium cum servitio;" but for myself, "potior visa est periculosa libertas quieto servitio."—NEWTON.

[u] *If he aught begin,*
How frequent to desert him, &c.

Is there any allusion here to the last ineffectual efforts of the republican general Lambert against Monk and the Restoration, when he was deserted by the people, and at last taken prisoner by his old partisan Ingoldsby?—DUNSTER.

[v] *How Succoth and the fort of Penuel, &c.*

The men of Succoth, and of the tower of Penuel, refused to give loaves of bread to Gideon and his three hundred men pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. See Judges viii. 4–9.—NEWTON.

[w] *And how ingrateful Ephraim, &c.*

Jephthah subdued the children of Ammon; and he is said to have "defended Israel by argument not worse than by arms," on account of the message which he sent unto the king of the children of Ammon, Judges xi. 15–27. For his victory over the Ammonites, the Ephraimites envied and quarrelled with him; and threatened to burn his house with fire: but Jephthah and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, and took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites, and there slew those of them who could not rightly pronounce the word Shibboleth; and there fell at that time two-and-forty thousand of them. See Judges xii. 1–6.—NEWTON.

Cho. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men;
Unless there be who think not God at all:
If any be, they walk obscure:
For of such doctrine never was there school,
But the heart of the fool[x],
And no man therein doctor but himself[y].
Yet more there be, who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wandering thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution[z]:
Till, by their own perplexities involved,
They ravel more, still less resolved,
But never find self-satisfying solution.
As if they would confine the Interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt
Whom so it pleases him by choice
From national obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.
He would not else, who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,
To set his people free,
Have prompted this heroick Nazarite,
Against his vow of strictest purity[a],
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.
Down, reason, then; at least, vain reasonings, down;
Though reason here aver,
That moral verdict quits her of unclean[b]:
Unchaste was subsequent; her stain not his.

[x] *But the heart of the fool.*

Alluding to Psalm xiv. 1. And the sentiment is not very unlike that of a celebrated divine:—" 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:' and who but a fool would have said so?"—NEWTON.

[y] *And no man therein doctor but himself.*

There is something rather too quaint and fanciful in this conceit; and it appears the worse, as this speech of the Chorus is of so serious a nature, and filled with so many deep and solemn truths.—THYER.

[z] *His glory's diminution.*

This expression is strong, as anciently understood. Cic. "de Orat." ii. 39:—"Majestatem populi Romani minuere" is the same as "crimen læsæ majestatis." And Corn. Nepos, "Ages." iv., "religionem minuere" is "violare."—RICHARDSON.

[a] *Vow of strictest purity.*

Not a vow of celibacy, but of strictest purity from Mosaical and legal uncleanness.—WARBURTON.

[b] *That moral verdict quits her of unclean.*

That is, by the law of nature a Philistine woman was not unclean, yet the law of Moses held her to be so. I do not know why the poet thought fit to make his hero scepticise on a point, as irreconcilable to reason, which may be very well accounted for

But see, here comes thy reverend sire
With careful steps, locks white as down,
Old Manoah: advise
Forthwith how thou oughtst to receive him.
Sam. Ay me! Another inward grief, awaked
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

Enter MANOAH.

Man. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place; if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My son, now captive, hither hath inform'd
Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age [c]
Came lagging after; say if he be here.
Cho. As signal now in low dejected state,
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.
Man. O miserable change [d]! is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renown'd,
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to angels, walk'd their streets,
None offering fight; who single combatant
Duel'd their armies rank'd in proud array,
Himself an army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward arm'd
At one spear's length! O ever-failing trust
In mortal strength! and, O, what not in man
Deceivable and vain? Nay, what thing good
Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gain'd a son,
And such a son as all men hail'd me happy:—
Who would be now a father in my stead?
O, wherefore did God grant me my request,

by the best rules of human prudence and policy. The institution of Moses was to keep the Jewish people distinct and separate from the nations: this the lawgiver effected by a vast variety of means; one of which was to hold all other nations under a legal impurity; the best means of preventing intermarriages with them.—WARBURTON.

[c] *While mine cast back with age.*

This is very artfully and properly introduced, to account for the Chorus coming to Samson before Manoah; for it is not to be supposed that any of his friends should be more concerned for his welfare, or more desirous to visit him, than his father.—NEWTON.

[d] *O miserable change, &c.*

This speech of Manoah is, in my opinion, very beautiful in its kind. The thoughts are exactly such as one may suppose would occur to the mind of the old man, and are expressed with an earnestness and impatience very well suited to that anguish of mind he must be in at the sight of his son under such miserable, afflicting circumstances. It is not at all unbecoming the pious, grave character of Manoah, to represent him, as Milton does, even complaining and murmuring at this "disposition" of Heaven, in the first bitterness of his soul. Such sudden starts of infirmity are ascribed to some of the greatest personages in Scripture; and it is agreeable to that well-known maxim, that religion may regulate, but can never eradicate natural passions and affections.—THYER.

And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest prayers; then, given with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind[e]?
For this did the angel twice descend? for this
Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a plant[f]
Select, and sacred, glorious for a while,
The miracle of men; then in an hour
Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound[g],
Thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves?
Alas! methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities,
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.
Sam. Appoint[h] not heavenly disposition, father:
Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me
But justly; I myself have brought them on,
Sole authour I, sole cause: if aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned
The mystery of God given me under pledge
Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.
This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,
But warn'd by oft experience; did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her highth

[e] *Then, given with solemn hand*
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind?

He has raised this beautiful imagery on the following text, Luke xi. 12:—"If a son shall ask of his father an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" He was not always so happy.—Warburton.

He has been peculiarly happy in the use of this imagery. Thus again:—"A most deadly and scorpion-like gift," 'Prose works,' vol. i. p. 304, ed. 1698. Again, in his 'Tetrachordon:'—"It is man's perverse cooking, who hath turned this bounty of God into a scorpion." Ibid. p. 335.—Todd.

[f] *As of a plant.*

This is a frequent scriptural metaphor. See Isaiah v. 7, liii. 2. Homer describes Thetis thus speaking of her son Achilles, Il. xviii. 57. Theocritus also speaks in similar language of Hercules, "Idyll." xxiv. 101.—Dunster.

[g] *Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound.*

The succession of participles renders the description more pathetic, as in ver. 563:—

Now blind, dishearten'd, shamed, dishonour'd, quell'd.

An example of similar effect occurs in the poet's description of the fallen angels, after their defeat, 'Paradise Lost,' b. vi. 851:—

Of their wonted vigour left them drain'd,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.—Todd.

[h] *Appoint.*

That is, arraign, summon to answer.—Warburton.

Perhaps limit, or direct; or rather, according to an old acceptation of the word, blame, lay the fault upon. See Barret's "Alvearie," 1580—"Appoynt," col. 2, No. 497.—Todd.

Of nuptial love profess'd, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,
And rivals? In this other was there found
More faith, who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offer'd only, by the scent conceived
Her spurious first-born, treason against me[i]?
Thrice she assay'd with flattering prayers and sighs,
And amorous reproaches, to win from me
My capital secret[j]; in what part my strength
Lay stored, in what part summ'd, that she might know:
Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly, and with what impudence
She purposed to betray me; and (which was worse
Than undissembled hate) with what contempt
She sought to make me traitor to myself:
Yet the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,
With blandish'd parlies, feminine assaults,
Tongue-batteries[k], she surceased not, day nor night,
To storm me overwatch'd, and wearied out,
At times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,
Who, with a grain of manhood well resolved,
Might easily have shook off all her snares:
But foul effeminacy held me yoked
Her bond-slave; O indignity, O blot[l]
To honour and religion! servile mind

[i] *Treason against me.*

By our laws called petty treason.—RICHARDSON.

[j] *My capital secret, &c.*

I am afraid this is an intended pun; if so, it is a most indefensible expression; and yet resembling what is said, 'Paradise Lost,' b. xii. 383:—

> Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise
> Expect with mortal pain;

where the reference certainly is to the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent.—DUNSTER.

[k] *Tongue-batteries, &c.*

The phrase was probably suggested by Shakspeare, "King Henry VI." p. I. a. iii. s. 3:—

> I am vanquish'd; these haughty words of hers
> Have batter'd me like roaring cannon-shot, &c.

That this passage was in the poet's mind, may be farther proved, I think, from ver. 235:—

> Who, vanquish'd with a peal of words,
> Gave up my fort.

Compare also the following passage in an old drama, entitled "The History of the Tryall of Cheualry," &c., 4to, 1605:—

> Eares—
> Pearst with the volley of thy battring words.

The Scriptural account is this:—"And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him so that his soul was vexed unto death, that he told her all his heart." Judges xvi. 16, 17.—TODD.

[l] *O indignity, O blot, &c.*

Nothing could give the reader a better idea of a great and heroic spirit in the cir-

Rewarded well with servile punishment!
The base degree to which I now am fallen,
These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base
As was my former servitude, ignoble,
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,
That saw not how degenerately I served.
Man. I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son,
Rather approved them not; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how thou mightst
Find some occasion to infest our foes.
I state not that; this I am sure, our foes
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
Their captive, and their triumph; thou the sooner
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms,
To violate the sacred trust of silence
Deposited within thee; which to have kept
Tacit, was in thy power: true; and thou bear'st
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying,
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains:
This day the Philistines a popular feast [m]
Here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud,
To Dagon, as their god, who hath deliver'd
Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God,
Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,
Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.
Sam. Father, I do acknowledge and confess,
That I this honour, I this pomp, have brought
To Dagon, and advanced his praises high
Among the heathen round; to God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and oped the mouths

cumstances of Samson, than this sudden gust of indignation and passionate self-reproach upon the mentioning of his weakness. Besides, there is something vastly grand and noble in his reflection upon his present condition on this occasion:—

These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base, &c.—THYER.

[m] *This day the Philistines a popular feast, &c.*

Judges xvi. 23:—"Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand," &c. This incident the poet has finely improved, and with great judgment he has put this reproach of Samson into the mouth of his father, rather than any other of the dramatis personæ.—NEWTON.

Of idolists and atheists; have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols;
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end; all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presumed,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive or linger, thus provoked;
But will arise, and his great name assert:
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers [n].
Man. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words
I as a prophecy receive [o]; for God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
Thou must not in the mean while here forgot,
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight,
Neglected. I already have made my way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom: well they may by this
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge
By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.
Sam. Spare that proposal, father; spare the trouble
Of that solicitation; let me here,
As I deserve, pay on my punishment;
And expiate, if possible, my crime,
Shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,

[n] *Blank his worshippers.*

That is, confound. So, in "Hamlet," a. iii. s. 2:—

Each opposite that blanks the face of joy.

Milton often uses the adjective "blank" also in the sense of confounded.—Todd.

[o] *And these words*
I as a prophecy receive.

This method of one person's taking an omen from the words of another was frequently practised among the ancients; and in these words the downfal of Dagon's worshippers is artfully presignified, as the death of Samson is in other places; but Manoah, as it was natural, accepts the good omen, without thinking of the evil that is to follow.—Newton.

How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front! But I
God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have publish'd, impiously,
Weakly at least, and shamefully; a sin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn [p]
To their abyss and horrid pains confined.
Man. Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite;
But act not in thy own affliction, son;
Repent the sin; but, if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;
Or the execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself: perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;
Who evermore approves, and more accepts
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission),
Him, who, imploring mercy, sues for life,
Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due;
Which argues over-just, and self-displeased
For self-offence, more than for God offended.
Reject not then what offer'd means [q], who knows
But God hath set before us, to return thee
Home to thy country and his sacred house,
Where thou mayst bring thy offerings, to avert
His farther ire, with prayers and vows renew'd?
Sam. His pardon I implore; but as for life,
To what end should I seek it? when in strength

[p] *That Gentiles in their parables condemn, &c.*

Alluding to the story of Tantalus, who for revealing the secrets of the gods was condemned to pains in hell. Cicero, "Tusc. Disp." iv. 16. "Poetæ impendere apud inferos saxum Tantalo faciunt ob scelera, animique impotentiam, et superbiloquentiam." Euripides [illegible] same punishment, and for the same reason, "Orestes," v. 8.

Mr. Warburton's remark is that "the ancient mystagogues taught, that the gods punished both the revealers and the violators of their mysteries." Milton had here in his eye that fine passage of Virgil, Æn. vi. 617:—

Sedet, æternumque sedebit,
Infelix Theseus. Phlegyasque miserrimus omnes
Admonet, &c.—NEWTON.

The passage, cited by Dr. Newton from the "Tusculan Questions," does not explain the story of Tantalus as here referred to: neither does the passage from Euripides without its gloss from the scholiast; where indeed it is said that Tantalus was punished for revealing the mysteries of the gods. But the classical authority in Milton's mind I suppose to have been that of Ovid, who expressly ascribes the punishment of Tantalus to his shameful garrulity, which is said to be a grievous crime, "De Art. Amandi," ii. 601, &c.—DUNSTER.

[q] *Reject not then what offer'd means.*

That is, those means, which who knows but God hath set before us: "what" for "those which." The expression is a little hard, but to this effect: "Reject not these means of ransom, which, for anything one can tell, God may have set before us, or suggested to us, in order to return thee," &c.—HURD.

All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes,
With youthful courage, and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from heaven foretold, and high explôits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of acts indeed heroick, far beyond
The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed;
Fearless of danger, like a petty god
I walk'd about admired of all, and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring my affront;
Then swollen with pride, into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains[r],
Soften'd with pleasure and voluptuous life;
At length to lay my head[s] and hallow'd pledge
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me,
Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece;
Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,
Shaven, and disarm'd among mine enemies.
Cho. Desire of wine, and all delicious drinks,
Which many a famous warriour overturns,
Thou couldst repress; nor did the dancing ruby[t],
Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour, or the smell,
Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men[u],
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream[v].

[r] *Into the snare I fell*
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains.

See Fairfax's translation of Tasso, b. iv. 26, where Hedroart, sending Armida to seduce the Christian host, and, if possible, its leader, bids her

Frame snares of looks, trains of alluring speech.—DUNSTER.

[s] *At length to lay my head, &c.*

Compare Spenser's "Faerie Queene," II. vi. 14.—

Thus when shee had his eyes and sences fed
With false delights, and fill'd with pleasures vayn,
Into a shady vale she soft him led,
And layd him downe upon a grassy playn:
She sett beside, laying his head disarm'd
In her loose lap.—TODD.

[t] *The dancing ruby, &c.*

Dr. Newton and Mr. Thyer remark, that the poet probably alludes to Prov. xxiii. 31:—"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright." Milton has also "rubied nectar," 'Par. Lost,' b. v. 633. And dancing he has transferred hither from his 'Comus,' v. 673:—

And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds.—TODD

[u] *Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men.*

Judges ix. 13, "Wine, which cheereth God and man." Milton says "gods," which is a just paraphrase, meaning the hero-gods of the heathen. Jotham is here speaking to an idolatrous city, that "went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god;" a god sprung from among men, as may be partly collected from his name, as well as from divers other circumstances of the story. Hesiod, in a similar expression, says that "the vengeance of the Fates pursued the crimes of gods and men," Theog. v. 220.—WARBURTON.

[v] *Cool crystalline stream.*

Borrowed by Mason, in his additions to Gray's fragment of an "Ode to Vicissitude."

Sam. Wherever fountain or fresh current flow'd
Against the eastern ray [w], translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod [x],
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirst, and refresh'd; nor envied them the grape,
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.
Cho. O, madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidden made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink [y] was only from the liquid brook.
Sam. But what avail'd this temperance, not complete
Against another object more enticing?
What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquish'd? by which means,
Now blind, dishearten'd, shamed, dishonour'd, quell'd,
To what can I be useful, wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed,
But to sit idle on the household hearth [z],
A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,
Or pitied object; these redundant locks,
Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,
Vain monument of strength; till length of years
And sedentary numbness craze my limbs [a]
To a contemptible old age obscure?
Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread;

[w] *Wherever fountain or fresh current flow'd*
Against the eastern ray, &c.

This circumstance was very probably suggested to our author by Tasso's poem "Del Mondo creato," giorna iii. st. 8.—THYER.

Mr. Geddes, in his learned and entertaining "Essay on the Composition, &c., of Plato," considers these lines of Milton as possessing much of the same spirit, though applied to another thing, with a passage in the philosopher's "Io," pp. 533, 534, tom. i. edit. Serran., where, speaking of the poets, he says: "As soon as they enter the winding mazes of harmony, they become lymphatic, and rove like the furious Bacchanals, who in their frenzy draw honey and milk out of the rivers. The poets tell us the same thing of themselves," &c. Essay, 1748, p. 184.—TODD.

[x] *With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod.*

This description of the first ray of light at the moment of sunrise, is eminently bold and beautiful. We might trace it to Euripides, "Suppl." 652, to which Dr. Hurd refers Milton's "long-level'd rule of streaming light," 'Comus,' v. 340.—DUNSTER.

[y] *Whose drink, &c.*

Samson was a Nazarite, Judges xiii. 7; therefore to drink no wine, nor shave his head. See Numb. vi., Amos ii. 12.—RICHARDSON.

[z] *But to sit idle on the household hearth, &c.*

It is supposed, with probability enough, that Milton chose Samson for his subject, because he was a fellow-sufferer with him in the loss of his eyes: however, one may venture to say, that the similitude of their circumstances has enriched the poem with several very pathetic descriptions of the misery of blindness.—THYER.

[a] *Craze my limbs.*

He uses the word "craze" much in the same manner as in the 'Par. Lost,' b. xii. 210.—NEWTON.

Till vermin, or the draff[b] of servile food,
Consume me, and oft-invocated death
Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

Man. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift
Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age outworn.
But God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to spring[c], thy thirst to allay
After the brunt of battel, can as easy
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;
And I persuade me so: why else this strength
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
His might continues[d] in thee not for naught,
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

Sam. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
Nor the other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:
So much I feel my genial spirits droop[e],
My hopes all flat, Nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself;
My race of glory run, and race of shame;
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

[b] *Draff.*

The refuse. See 'Par. Lost,' b. x. 630. Thus Chaucer, "Prol. to the Parsones Tale:"—

Why should I sowen draf out of my fist,
When I may sowen whete if that me liste?

And Shakspeare, "Hen. IV." part I. a. iv. s. 2.—"You would think I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals, lately come from swine-keeping, from eating draff and husks."—DUNSTER.

[c] *But God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer*
From the dry ground to spring, &c.

See Judges xv. 18, 19. But Milton differs from our translation of the Bible. The translation says that "God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw:" Milton says, that "God caused a fountain from the dry ground to spring;" and herein he follows the Chaldee paraphrast and the best commentators, who understand it that God made a cleft in some part of the ground or rock, in the place called Lehi; Lehi signifying both a jaw, and a place so called.—NEWTON.

[d] *His might continues, &c.*

A fine preparative, which raises our expectation of some great event to be produced by his strength.—WARBURTON.

[e] *So much I feel my genial spirits droop, &c.*

Here Milton, in the person of Samson, describes exactly his own case, what he felt, and what he thought, in some of his melancholy hours: he could not have written so well but from his own feeling and experience; and the very flow of the verses is melancholy, and excellently adapted to the subject. As Mr. Thyer expresses it, there is a remarkable solemnity and air of melancholy in the very sound of these verses; and the reader will find it very difficult to pronounce them without that grave and serious tone of voice which is proper for the occasion.—NEWTON.

Every reader of taste must subscribe with heartiness to this testimony of Thyer and Newton. The passage is truly pathetic and melodious.

Man. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
From anguish of the mind and humours black,
That mingle with thy fancy [f]. I however
Must not omit [g] a father's timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
By ransom, or how else: meanwhile be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit. [*Exit.*
Sam. O, that torment should not be confined [h]
To the body's wounds and sores,
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, breast, and reins;
But must secret passage find
To the inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense.
My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease,
But, finding no redress, ferment and rage;
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.
Thoughts, my tormentors, arm'd with deadly stings,
Mangle [i] my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise

[f] *And humours black,*
That mingle with thy fancy.

This very just notion of the mind or fancy's being affected, and as it were tainted with the vitiated humours of the body, Milton had before adopted in his 'Paradise Lost,' where he introduces Satan in the shape of a toad at the ear of Eve, b. iv. 804:—

Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
The animal spirits, &c.

So again in 'Comus,' v. 809:—

'Tis but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood.—Thyer.

[g] *I however*
Must not omit, &c.

Such is also the language of Oceanus to his nephew Prometheus, Æsch. "Prom. Vinct."—Dunster.

[h] *O, that torment should not be confined, &c.*

Milton, no doubt, was apprehensive that this long description of Samson's grief and misery might grow tedious to the reader, and therefore here with great judgment varies both his manner of expressing it, and the versification. These sudden starts of impatience are very natural to persons in such circumstances, and this rough and unequal measure of the verse is very well suited to it.—Thyer.

[i] *Thoughts, my tormentors, arm'd with deadly stings,*
Mangle, &c.

This descriptive imagery is fine and well pursued. The idea is taken from the effects of poisonous salts in the stomach and bowels, which stimulate, tear, inflame, and exulcerate the tender fibres, and end in a mortification, which he calls "death's benumbing opium," as in that stage the pain is over.—Warburton.

Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or med'cinal liquor[j] can asswage,
Nor breath of vernal air[k] from snowy Alp[l].
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure:
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion.
I was his nursling once[m], and choice delight,
His destined from the womb,
Promised by heavenly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up, and thrived amain:
He led me on to mightiest deeds,
Above the nerve of mortal arm,
Against the uncircumcised, our enemies:
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope:
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless:
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,

[j] *Or med'cinal liquor.*

Here "medicinal" is pronounced with the accent upon the last syllable but one, as in Latin; which is more musical than as we commonly pronounce it, "medícinal," with the accent upon the last syllable but two, or "med'cinal" as Milton has used it in 'Comus.' The same pronunciation occurs in Shakspeare, "Othello," a. v. s. 2:—

Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum.—NEWTON.

"Medicinal" is not the reading of Milton's own edition: in that it is "medcinal." The supposed emendation of "medicinal" is made in the folio of 1688, and it has been since invariably followed.—TODD.

[k] *Nor breath of vernal air.*

So, in that most delightful passage in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 264:—

airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove.—TODD.

[l] *From snowy Alp.*

He uses "Alp" for mountain in general, as in 'Paradise Lost,' b. ii. 620. "Alp," in the strict etymology of the word, signifies a mountain white with snow. We have indeed appropriated the name to the high mountains which separate Italy from France and Germany; but any high mountain may be so called, and so Sidonius Apollinaris calls Mount Athos, speaking of Xerxes cutting through it, "Carm." ii. 510.—NEWTON.

Milton took this use of the word from the Italian poets, amongst whom it was very common.—HURD.

[m] *I was his nursling once, &c.*

This part of Samson's speech is little more than a repetition of what he had said before, v. 23:—

O, wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
Twice by an angel, &c.

But yet it cannot justly be imputed as a fault to our author. Grief, though eloquent, is not tied to forms; and is besides apt in its own nature frequently to recur to, and repeat, its source and subject.—THYER.

No long petition; speedy death,
The close of all my miseries, and the balm.
Cho. Many are the sayings of the wise,
In ancient and in modern books inroll'd,
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude;
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incident to man's frail life,
Consolatories writ
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought[n],
Lenient of grief[o] and anxious thought:
But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
Harsh, and of dissonant mood[p] from his complaint;
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above,
Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold.
God of our fathers, what is man[q]!
That thou toward him with hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious[r],
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rulest
The angelick orders, and inferiour creatures mute,
Irrational and brute?
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That, wandering loose about,
Grow up and perish, as the summer fly,

[n] *And much persuasion sought.*

I suppose an error of the press for *fraught*.—WARBURTON.

But "sought" may mean, collected studiously or with pains; or, it may be used in the sense of *recherché* in French; curious, refined, far-fetched.—DUNSTER.

[o] *Lenient of grief.*

Expressed from what we quoted before from Horace, "Ep." I. i. 34:—

Sunt verba et voces, quibus hunc lenire dolorem
Possis.—NEWTON.

[p] *Or rather seems a tune*
Harsh, and of dissonant mood, &c.

Alluding to Ecclus. xxii. 6.—"A tale out of season is as music in mourning."—THYER.

[q] *God of our fathers, what is man! &c.*

This, and the following paragraph, to ver. 705, seem to be an imitation of the Chorus in Seneca's "Hippolytus," where the immature and undeserved fate of that young hero is lamented, a. iv. 971:—

sed cur idem,
Qui tanta regis, sub quo vasti
Pondera mundi librata suos
Ducunt orbes, hominum nimium
Securus ades: non sollicitus
Prodesse bonis, nocuisse malis?—THYER.

This apostrophe opens with a sublime pathos.

[r] *Contrarious.*

This seems to me a harsh word, though Todd shows that it is used by Chaucer.

Heads without name [s], no more remember'd;
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,
To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect:
Yet toward these thus dignified, thou oft,
Amidst their highth of noon [t],
Changest thy countenance, and thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.
  Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscured, which were a fair dismission;
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high;
Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission;
Oft leavest them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey [u], or else captived;
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times [v],

[s] *Heads without name, &c.*

So Dryden:—

A tribe without a name.

Milton here probably had in view the Greek term for this lower class of mortals. They style them "men not numbered," or "not worth the numbering."—THYER.

[t] *Amidst their highth of noon.*

This forcible expression is applied in the same manner by Sandys, in his "Paraphrase upon Job," ed. 1648, p. 34:—

When men are from their noon of glory thrown.

Again, in his "Paraphrase upon the Psalms," ed. supr. p. 127:—

Thou hast on slippery heights their greatness placed;
Down headlong from their noon of glory cast.—TODD.

[u] *Their carcasses*
To dogs and fowls a prey.

Plainly alluding to Homer, Il. i. 4.—NEWTON.

[v] *Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times, &c.*

Here, no doubt, Milton reflected upon the trials and sufferings of his party after the Restoration; and probably he might have in mind particularly the case of Sir Harry Vane, whom he has so highly celebrated in one of his sonnets. "If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty," &c.: this was his own case; he escaped with life, but lived in poverty; and though he was always very sober and temperate, yet he was much afflicted with the gout and other "painful diseases in crude old age," *cruda senectus*, when he was not yet a very old man:—

Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days.

Some time after I had written this, I had the pleasure to find that I had fallen into the same vein of thinking with Mr. Warburton: but he has opened and pursued it much farther, with a penetration and liveliness of fancy peculiar to himself. "God of our fathers," to ver. 704, is a bold expostulation with Providence for the ill success of the good old cause:—

But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd
To some great work thy glory.

In these three lines are described the characters of the heads of the Independent Enthusiasts: "which in part they effect;" that is, by the overthrow of the monarchy, without being able to raise their projected republic:—

And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deform'd,
In crude old age [w];
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days: in fine,
Just or unjust, alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end [x].
So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already!

> Yet toward these thus dignified, thou oft,
> Amidst their highth of noon,
> Changest thy countenance.

After Richard had laid down, all power came into the hands of the enthusiastic Independent Republicans; when a sudden revolution, by the return of Charles II., broke all their measures —

> With no regard
> Of highest favours past
> From thee on them, or them to thee of service;

that is, without any regard of those favours shown by thee to them in their wonderful successes against tyranny and superstition [Church and State], or of those services they paid to thee in declaring for religion and liberty [Independency and a Republic].

> Nor only dost degrade, &c.
> Too grievous for the trespass or omission.

By the trespass of these precious saints, Milton means the quarrels among themselves; and by the omission, the not making a clear stage in the constitution, and new-modelling the law, as well as national religion, as Ludlow advised. "Captived:" several were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, as Lambert and Martin. "Or to the unjust tribunals," &c. The trials and condemnation of Vane and the regicides. The concluding verses describe his own case:—

> If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty—
> Painful diseases and deform'd—
> Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
> The punishment of dissolute days:

his losses in the excise, and his gout not caused by intemperance. But Milton was the most heated enthusiast of his time: speaking of Charles I.'s murder in his 'Defence of the People of England,' he says:—"Quanquam ego hæc divino potius instinctu gesta esse crediderim, quoties memoria repeto," &c.—NEWTON.

[w] *In crude old age.*

"Crude old age" in Virgil, and in other writers, is strong and robust,—"Cruda Deo viridisque senectus:" but Milton uses here "crude" for premature, and coming before its time; as "cruda funera" in Statius: old age brought on by poverty and by sickness.—JORTIN.

[x] *For oft alike both come to evil end.*

This may seem a strange sentiment to come from the Chorus; but was proper to console Samson, who suffered chiefly from those "thoughts his tormentors," which represented his calamity as a decisive mark of his superior guilt, and of Heaven's resentment. Hence those "swoonings of despair, and sense of Heaven's desertion," for which there was no cause, if the just might sometimes thus suffer. This condescension is of the character of the Chorus: "Ille bonis faveat et consilietur amice!" We are not to consider the sentiment simply in itself, but as adapted to present circumstances. The purpose of the Chorus was not to calumniate Providence, but to soothe the unhappy sufferer. Besides, the general moral of the piece, enforced by the Chorus itself at the end—"All is best, though we oft doubt," &c., rectifies all, and counteracts any ill impression from this carnal sentiment.—HURD.

Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end [y].
But who is this, what thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems,
That so bedeck'd, ornate, and gay,
Comes this way sailing
Like a stately ship [z]
Of Tarsus [a], bound for the isles
Of Javan or Gadire
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails fill'd [b], and streamers waving,

[y] *Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn*
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

The concluding verses of this beautiful chorus appear to me particularly affecting, from the persuasion that Milton, in composing them, addressed the last two immediately to Heaven, as a prayer for himself. If the conjecture of this application be just, we may add, that never was the prevalence of a righteous prayer more happily conspicuous; and let me here remark, that however various the opinions of men may be concerning the merits or demerits of Milton's political character, the integrity of his heart appears to have secured to him the favour of Providence; since it pleased the Giver of all good not only to turn his labours to a peaceful end, but to irradiate his declining life with the most abundant portion of those pure and sublime mental powers, for which he had constantly and fervently prayed, as the choicest bounty of Heaven.—HAYLEY.

[z] *Like a stately ship, &c.*

The thought of comparing a woman to a ship is not entirely new. Plautus has it in his "Pœnulus," I. ii. 1:—

Negotii sibi qui volet vim parare,
Navem et mulierem, hæc duo comparato, &c.

Mr. Warburton, in a note on the "Merry Wives of Windsor," a. iii. s. 8, speaking of the ship-tire, says, "it was an open head-dress, with a kind of scarf depending from behind." Its name of ship-tire was, I presume, from its giving the wearer some resemblance of a ship, as Shakspeare says, "in all her trim;" with all her pennants out, and flags and streamers flying. Thus Milton paints Dalila. This was an image familiar with the poets of that time. Thus, in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Wit without Money:"—"She spreads sattens as the king's ships do canvass."—NEWTON.

[a] *Of Tarsus.*

There is frequent mention in Scripture of the ships of Tarshish, which Milton as well as some commentators might conceive to be the same as Tarsus, in Cilicia: "bound for the isles of Javan," that is, Greece; for Javan or Ion, the fourth son of Japhet, is said to have peopled Greece and Ionia, or Gadire, Gades, Cadiz.—NEWTON.

[b] *With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,*
Sails fill'd, &c.

Gray has also drawn a beautiful comparison of a ship in gallant trim, in his "Bard," v. 71, &c. I beg leave to introduce to the reader's notice a similar description, of remarkable elegance, in Giles Fletcher's "Christ's Victorie," b. ii. st. 35:—

Like as a ship, in which no ballance lies,
Without a pilot on the sleeping waves,
Fairly along with winde and water flies,
And painted masts with silken sails embraves,
That Neptune's self the bragging vessel saves,
To laugh awhile at her so proud array:
Her waving streamers loosely she lets play,
And flagging colours shine as bright as smiling day.

Where "embraves" is decorates; as "bravery" in the text is finery or ornament; in which sense the word is commonly used by our old poets.—TODD.

Courted by all the winds[c] that hold them play,
An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind:
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem;
And now, at nearer view, no other certain
Than Dalila thy wife.
Sam. My wife! my traitress: let her not come near me.
Cho. Yet on she moves[d], now stands and eyes thee fix'd,
About to have spoke; but now, with head declined,
Like a fair flower[e] surcharged with dew, she weeps,
And words address'd seem into tears dissolved,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil:
But now again she makes address to speak.

Enter DALILA.

Dal. With doubtful feet[f] and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson;
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet, if tears
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw),
My penance hath not slacken'd, though my pardon
No way assured. But conjugal affection,
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on, desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,

[c] *Streamers waving,*
Courted by all the winds.

This is a beautiful image, exquisitely expressed. The whole of this chorus is among the finest passages in this grand poem.

[d] *Yet on she moves, &c.*

Like Ismene in the "Antigone" of Sophocles, v. 532.

Mr. Jortin and Mr. Thyer both concurred in the same observation, and therefore it is more likely to be true.—NEWTON.

[e] *But now, with head declined,*
Like a fair flower, &c.

Probably from Homer, Il. viii. 306.

Dryden, in his "Aurengzebe," has almost literally copied Milton:—

Your head declined, as hiding grief from view,
Droops, like a rose surcharged with morning dew.

Phineas Fletcher is fond of this classical allusion. See his "Purple Island," c. xi. st. 30, and particularly st. 38:—

So have I often seen a purple flower,
Fainting through heat, hang down her drooping head, &c.

Carew has also a similar comparison:—

As lilies, overcharged with rain, they bend
Their beauteous heads, &c.—TODD.

[f] *With doubtful feet, &c.*

The scene between Samson and Dalila is drawn up with great judgment and particular beauty. One cannot conceive a more artful, soft, and persuasive eloquence than that which is put into the mouth of Dalila; nor is the part of Samson less to be admired for that stern and resolute firmness which runs through it. What also gives both parts a great additional beauty, is their forming so fine a contrast to each other.—THYER.

If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash, but more unfortunate misdeed.
Sam. Out, out, hyæna[g]! these are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
And reconcilement move with feign'd remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change;
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,
With goodness[h] principled not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days[i],
Entangled with a poisonous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.
Dal. Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour
To lessen or extenuate my offence;
But that, on the other side, if it be weigh'd
By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,

[g] *Out, out, hyæna!*

The hyæna is a creature somewhat like a wolf, and is said to imitate a human voice so artfully as to draw people to it, and then devour them. So Solinus, the transcriber of Pliny, cap. 27:—"Multa de ea mira: primum, quod sequitur stabula pastorum, et auditu assiduo addiscit vocamen, quod exprimere possit imitatione vocis humanæ, ut in hominem astu accitum nocte sæviat." A celebrated tragic writer makes use of the same comparison, "Orphan," a. iii.:—

'Tis thus the false hyæna makes her moan,
To draw the pitying traveller to her den:
Your sex are so, such false dissemblers all, &c.

Milton applies it to a woman, but Otway to the men: which with the greater justice, let the critics and the ladies determine.—Newton.

[h] *That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,*
With goodness, &c.

Milton had reason to lament that excess of indulgence with which he forgave and received again his disobedient and long-alienated wife; since their reunion not only disquieted his days, but gave birth to daughters who seem to have inherited the perversity of their mother. These pathetic lines strike me as a forcible allusion to his own connubial infelicity.—Hayley.

[i] *Are drawn to wear out miserable days.*

He makes the same reflection, in his 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,' on two persons ill embarkt in wedlock. "What folly is it to stand combating and battering against invincible causes and effects, with evil upon evil, till either the best of our days be lingered out, or ended with some speeding sorrow!" b. i. 10.—Todd.

This passage from the above tract about invincible causes and effects confirms the observation with regard to the ill-assortment of Milton's first marriage.

Or else with just allowance counterpoised,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults;
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is, for nought,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
To what I did thou show'dst me first the way.
But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not:
Nor shouldst thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,
So near related, or the same of kind,
Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
Caused what I did? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou wouldst leave me
As her at Timna, sought by all means therefore
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:
No better way I saw than by importuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my power
Thy key of strength and safety: thou wilt say,
Why then reveal'd? I was assured by those
Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
Against thee but safe custody, and hold:
That made for me; I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed:
Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,
Mine and love's prisoner[j], not the Philistines';
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in love's law have pass'd for good,

[j] *Mine and love's prisoner.*

These few words express the substance of Juliet's beautiful speech to Romeo:—

'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone;
And yet no farther than a wanton's bird;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves;
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.—TODD.

Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.
Sam. How cunningly the sorceress displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!
That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, the example;
I led the way: bitter reproach, but true:
I to myself was false ere thou to me;
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed[k]; which when thou seest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feign'd. Weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it; weakness to resist
Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
With God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrain'd thee; call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust: love seeks to have love;
My love how couldst thou hope, who took'st the way
To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd[l]?
In vain thou strivest to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.
Dal. Since thou determinest weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou layest,
That wrought with me: thou know'st, the magistrates[m]

[k] *Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,*
Take to thy wicked deed, &c.

These sentiments of self-condemnation are expressed with wonderful dignity; they reflect all the noble and resolute virtue of the poet's own highly-principled mind.—DUNSTER.

[l] *Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd?*

The same manner of speaking as in 'Paradise Lost,' b. ix. 792:—

And knew not eating death.—NEWTON.

[m] *Thou know'st, the magistrates, &c.*

Judges xvi. 5:—"And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said," &c. So exact is Milton in all the particulars of the story, and improves every incident.—NEWTON.

Compare the account related by Sallust, of Cicero, who secured the harlot Fulvia to

And princes of my country came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threaten'd, urged,
Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion, press'd how just it was,
How honourable, how glorious, to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroy'd
Such numbers of our nation: and the priest
Was not behind[n], but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious
Dishonourer of Dagon; what had I
To oppose against such powerful arguments?
Only my love of thee held long debate,
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest: at length, that grounded maxim,
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men, that—To the publick good
Private respects must yield—with grave authority
Took full possession of me, and prevail'd;
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining.
Sam. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end;
In feign'd religion, smooth hypocrisy!
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I, before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation, chose thee from among
My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st[o];
Too well; unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but overpower'd

his interest; and through her means gained, by the force of promises, his intelligence of Cataline's machinations from Q. Curius, who was engaged in the conspiracy, and with whom Fulvia was criminally connected: "A principio consulatus sui, multa per Fulviam pollicendo, effecerat, ut Q. Curius (cui cum Fulvia stupri vetus consuetudo) consilia Catalinæ sibi proderet."—TODD.

[n] *And the priest*
Was not behind, &c.

The character of the priest, which makes a conspicuous figure here, is the poet's own addition to the scriptural account. It is obviously a satire on the ministers of the church.—DUNSTER.

[o] *Loved thee, as too well thou knew'st.*

There is an inconsistency here with what Samson had said before: here he professes a violent affection for Dalila, as the sole motive of his marrying her; whereas he had before asserted that he was in a certain degree determined to it by hopes of finding occasion thereby to oppress the Philistines, ver 234. Manoah likewise says, that Samson pleaded "divine impulsion" for both his marriages, ver. 422. But Milton may be understood to have imagined Samson, in his marriage with Dalila, acting merely from inclination, and (as people who do so are apt to reason falsely in their own vindication) falsely attributing and ascribing it to divine impulse. This is consistent with what is said, ver. 532, where Samson describes himself "swollen with pride," that is, at his superior strength; and on that account, as it seems, deserted by God, and falling into the "snare of fair fallacious looks," &c. So that what he here says to Dalila is true; and the real motives of his marrying her were, that he "loved her," as he himself says "too well."—DUNSTER.

By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;
Yet now am judged an enemy. Why then
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband,
Then, as since then, thy country's foe profess'd?
Being once a wife [p], for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country; nor was I there subject,
Nor under their protection, but my own;
Thou mine, not theirs: if aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations;
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds; violating the ends
For which our country is a name so dear;
Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal moved thee;
To please thy gods thou didst it: gods unable
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, gods cannot be;
Less therefore to be pleased, obey'd, or fear'd.
These false pretexts and varnish'd colours failing [q],
Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear!
Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worst, whatever be her cause.
Sam. For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath:
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.
Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson;
Afford me place to show what recompense
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided; only what remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
To afflict thyself in vain: though sight be lost [r],
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd
Where other senses want not their delights
At home in leisure and domestick ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance, to which

[p] *Being once a wife.*

Here seems again an allusion to the poet's own case with reference to the cause of the parliamentarians against that of the king, to which his wife was attached.

[q] *And varnish'd colours failing.*

See his 'Prose Works,' vol. i. p. 161, ed. 1698:—"Painting his lewd and deceitful principles with a smooth and glossy varnish in a doctrinall way, to bring about his wickedest purposes." I apprehend that Milton might employ the expression in allusion to St. James's description of the tongue, which is called the "varnish of iniquity," as it should be rendered. See Wetstein in Jac. iii. 6.—Todd.

[r] *Though sight be lost, &c.*

We have a similar sentiment in Cicero, "Tusc. Quæst.:"—"Animo autem multis modis variisque delectari licet, etiam si non adhibeatur aspectus," l. v. c. 38.—Dunster.

Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age
With all things grateful cheer'd, and so supplied,
That, what by me thou hast lost, thou least shalt miss.
Sam. No, no; of my condition take no care;
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain:
Nor think me so unwary or accursed,
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught: I know thy trains,
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils:
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms [s],
No more on me have power; their force is null'd;
So much of adder's wisdom I have learn'd [t],
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Loved, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone couldst hate me
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me;
How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child
Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,
And last neglected! How wouldst thou insult,
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thraldom; how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile!
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.
Dal. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.
Sam. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint [u].

[s] *Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms.*

Alluding, no doubt, to the story of Circe and the sirens: but did not our author's fondness for Greek learning make him here forget that it is a little out of character to represent Samson acquainted with the mythology of that country? It seems the more odd, as the allusion to the adder, immediately following, is taken from Scripture.—THYER.

He might as well be supposed to know the story of Circe and the sirens, as of Tantalus, &c., before, v. 500; and there is no more impropriety in the one than in the other.—NEWTON.

Mr. Thyer's observation is, however, just; and Dr. Johnson has not forgotten to notice the impropriety of all these allusions. Mr. Glasse, in his translation, and Mr. Penn, in his alteration, of this tragedy, have omitted these objectionable passages.—TODD.

[t] *So much of adder's wisdom I have learn'd.*

The allusion is to Psalm lviii. 4, 5:—"They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely."—NEWTON.

[u] *To tear thee joint by joint.*

Milton perhaps recollected blind Polymestor's desire of revenge upon Hecuba, in the play of that name by Euripides, v. 1125, ed. Barnes.—TODD.

At distance I forgive thee; go with that:
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives!
Cherish thy hasten'd widowhood[v] with the gold
Of matrimonial treason! so farewell.
Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers than winds and seas; yet winds to seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore:
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest, never to be calm'd.
Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate;
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounced?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame, if not double-faced, is double-mouth'd,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds;
On both his wings, one black, the other white[w],
Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight[x].

[v] *Cherish thy hasten'd widowhood.*

This sarcastical irony is very fine.

[w] *On both his wings, one black, the other white.*

Milton, in his poem, 'In Quint Nov.,' speaking of Fame, says,

Induit et variis exilia corpora plumis.

I do not recollect any instance of Fame having two wings of different colours assigned by any of the Roman poets. Milton seems to have equipped his deity very characteristically, by borrowing one wing from Infamy, and another from Victory or Glory, as they are both described by Silius Italicus; where Virtue contrasts herself with Pleasure, or Dissipation, l. xv. 95:—

atris
Circa te semper volitans Infamia pennis;
Mecum Honor, et Laudes, et læto Gloria vultu,
Et Decus, et niveis Victoria concolor alis.

Ben Jonson, in one of his Masks, introduces Fama Bona attired in white, with white wings; and she terms herself "the white-wing'd maid."—DUNSTER.

[x] *Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight.*

I think Fame has passed for a goddess ever since Hesiod deified her. Milton makes her a god, I know not why, unless secundem eos, qui dicunt utriusque sexus participationem habere numina. So, in his 'Lycidas,' he says, unless it be a false print:—

So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined urn,
And as he passes turn;

where Muse in the masculine for poet is very bold.

Perhaps it should here also be:

Bears greatest names in his wide aery flight.

What Milton says of Fame's bearing great names on his wings, seems to be partly from Horace, Od. II. ii. 7:—

Illum aget penna metuente solvi
Fama superstes.—JORTIN.

I apprehend that "wild" is full as applicable as "wide" to the character and office of Fame: and thus Shakspeare, "Othello," a. ii. s. 1:—

That paragons description and wild fame.—TODD.

My name perhaps among the circumcised
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defamed,
With malediction mention'd, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced:
But in my country, where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be named [y] among the famousest
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who, to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
Above the faith of wedlock-bands; my tomb,
With odours visited, and annual flowers [z];
Not less renown'd than in mount Ephraim
Jael [a], who with inhospitable guile
Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nail'd.
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The publick marks of honour and reward,
Conferr'd upon me for the piety,
Which to my country I was judged to have shown.
At this whoever envies or repines,
I leave him to his lot, and like my own [b]. [*Exit.*

[y] *I shall be named, &c.*

See the "Heraclidæ" of Euripides, v. 598.—DUNSTER.

[z] *My tomb,*
With odours visited, and annual flowers.

What is said in Scripture of the daughter of Jephthah, "that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament her," seems to imply that this solemn and periodical visitation of the tombs of eminent persons was an eastern custom.—THYER.

This affectionate custom of decorating the tombs of departed friends has descended to later times. See the "Iphigenia in Tauris" of Euripides, v. 632, ed. Barnes. It still exists in some parts of this island. Shakspeare alludes to it in "Cymbeline," a. iv. s. 5:—

With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave.

Whence Collins, with remarkable taste and pathos:—

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb,
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the blooming spring.

I take this opportunity of observing that Collins may probably have been indebted to a fine passage in Beaumont and Fletcher, "The Lover's Progress," a. iv. s. 1:—

I will kneel by him,
And on his hallow'd earth do my last duties:
I'll gather all the pride of spring to deck him:
Woodbines shall grow upon his honour'd grave;
And, as they prosper, clasp, to show our friendship;
And, when they wither, I'll die too.—TODD.

[a] *Not less renown'd than in mount Ephraim*
Jael.

Jael is celebrated in the noble song of Deborah and Barak, Judg. v. "And Deborah dwelt between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim," Judg. iv. 5.—NEWTON.

[b] *At this whoever envies or repines,*
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

See Teucer to the Chorus in Sophocles, "Ajax," v. 1060.—CALTON.

Cho. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting[c],
Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.
Sam. So let her go; God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secresy, my safety and my life.
Cho. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power[d],
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possess'd, nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt,
And secret sting of amorous remorse.
Sam. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end[e],
Not wedlock treachery endangering life.
Cho. It is not virtue[f], wisdom, valour, wit,
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
That woman's love can win or long inherit;
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit,
Which way soever men refer it;
Much like the riddle, Samson, in one day
Or seven, though one should musing sit.
If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferr'd
Thy paranymph[g], worthless to thee compared,
Successour in thy bed,
Nor both so loosely disallied
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously

[c] *A manifest serpent by her sting.*

The son of Sirach makes a similar observation on "an evil wife," Ecclus. xxvi. 7:—"He that hath hold of her is as though he held a scorpion."—TODD.

[d] *Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power.*

This truth Milton has finely exemplified in Adam forgiving Eve; and he had full experience of it in his own case. See 'Paradise Lost,' b. x. 940.—NEWTON.

[e] *Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end.*

Terence, "Andria," III. iii. 23:—

Amantium iræ amoris integratio est.—NEWTON.

[f] *It is not virtue, &c.*

However just the observation may be that Milton, in his 'Paradise Lost,' seems to court the favour of the female sex, it is very certain that he did not carry the same complaisance into this performance. What the Chorus here says outgoes the very bitterest satire of Euripides, who was called the "woman-hater." It may be said, indeed, in excuse, that the occasion was very provoking; and that these reproaches are rather to be looked upon as a sudden start of resentment, than cool and sober reasoning.—THYER.

These reflections are the more severe, as they are not spoken by Samson, who might be supposed to utter them out of pique and resentment, but are delivered by the Chorus as serious and important truths. But, by all accounts, Milton himself had suffered some uneasiness through the temper and behaviour of two of his wives; and no wonder therefore that, upon so tempting an occasion as this, he indulges his spleen a little, depreciates the qualifications of the women, and asserts the superiority of the men; and, to give these sentiments the greater weight, puts them into the mouth of the Chorus.—NEWTON.

[g] *Thy paranymph.*

Bride-man. "But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend," Judg. xiv. 20.—RICHARDSON.

Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavish'd on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,
Capacity not raised to apprehend
Or value what is best
In choice, but oftest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mix'd,
Of constancy no root infix'd,
That either they love nothing, or not long?
  Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best [h]
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil [i],
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief [j], in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
Draws him awry enslaved
With dotage, and his sense depraved
To folly and shameful deeds, which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,
Imbark'd with such a steers-mate at the helm?
  Favour'd of Heaven, who finds [k]
One virtuous, rarely found,
That in domestick good combines;
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
But virtue, which breaks through all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines, and most is acceptable above.
  Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotick power
Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,

[h] *To wisest men and best.*

Read "to the wisest man." See the following expressions: "in his way;" "draws him awry."—Meadowcourt.

We have such a change of the number in the 'Paradise Lost,' b. ix. 1183.—Newton.

I see no cause for this alteration.

[i] *Under virgin veil.*

Perhaps Milton here alludes to the Jewish virgins, who, being kept secluded from the sight of men, were called hidden or concealed; and when they were first presented to their husbands, covered their heads with a veil. But see his 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,' b. i. chap. 3; where he is speaking of the disappointments which may happen in choosing a wife, to "the sober man, honouring the appearance of modesty, and hoping well of every social virtue under the veil."—Todd.

[j] *A cleaving mischief.*

These words allude to the poisoned shirt sent to Hercules by his wife Dejanira.—Meadowcourt.

[k] *Favour'd of Heaven, who finds, &c.*

If Milton, like Solomon, and the son of Sirach, satirises the women in general, like them too he commends the virtuous and good; and esteems a good wife a blessing from the Lord. See Prov. xviii. 22, xix. 14, and Ecclus. xxvi. 1, 2.—Newton.

Smile she or lour:
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not sway'd
By female usurpation, nor dismay'd.
But had we best retire? I see a storm.
Sam. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.
Cho. But this another kind of tempest brings.
Sam. Be less abstruse; my riddling days are past.
Cho. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honied words; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward; I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
Haughty, as is his pile high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither
I less conjecture than when first I saw
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way:
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.
Sam. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.
Cho. His fraught we soon shall know: he now arrives.

Enter HARAPHA.

Har. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath;
Men call me Harapha[l], of stock renown'd
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old
That Kiriathaim held: thou know'st me now,
If thou at all art known[m]. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd,
Incredible to me, in this displeased,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters, where we might have tried
Each other's force in camp or listed field;
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report.
Sam. The way to know were not to see, but taste.
Har. Dost thou already single me? I thought

[l] *Men call me Harapha, &c.*

This character is fictitious, but is properly introduced by the poet, and not without some foundation in Scripture. Arapha, or rather Rapha (says Calmet), was father of the giants of Rephaim. The word Rapha may likewise signify simply a giant. "Of stock renown'd as Og;" see Deut. iii. 11. "Or Anak, and the Emims old;" see Deut. ii. 10, 11. "That Kiriathaim held;" see Gen. xiv. 5.—NEWTON.

[m] *Thou know'st me now,*
If thou at all art known.

He is made to speak in the spirit, and almost in the language of Satan, 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 830:—

Not to know me argues yourself unknown.—NEWTON.

Gyves [n] and the mill had tamed thee. O, that fortune
Had brought me to the field, where thou art famed
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw!
I should have forced thee soon wish other arms,
Or left thy carcase where the ass lay thrown:
So had the glory of prowess been recover'd
To Palestine, won by a Philistine
From the unforeskinn'd race of whom thou bear'st
The highest name for valiant acts: that honour,
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.
Sam. Boast not of what thou wouldst have done, but do
What then thou wouldst; thou seest it in thy hand.
Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain;
And thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.
Sam. Such usage as your honourable lords
Afford me, assassinated and betray'd,
Who durst not with their whole united powers
In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,
Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes
Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,
Till they had hired a woman with their gold,
Breaking her marriage faith to circumvent me.
Therefore, without feign'd shifts let be assign'd
Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee,
Or rather flight [o], no great advantage on me;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
And brigandine of brass [p], thy broad habergeon,

[n] *Gyves.*

Chains. So, in "Cymbeline," a. v. s. 3.—

Must I repent?
I cannot do it better than in gyves

And in Fairfax's "Tasso," b. v. st. 42:—

These hands were made to shake sharp spears and swords,
Not to be tied in gyves, &c.—NEWTON.

[o] *Sight may give thee,*
Or rather flight.

This play on words is beneath Milton.

[p] *And brigandine of brass, &c.*

"Brigandine," a coat of mail. Jer. xlvi. 4:—"Furbish the spears, and put on the brigandines." See also li. 3. "Habergeon," a coat of mail for the neck and shoulders. "Faer. Qu." II. vi. 29:—

Their mighty strokes their habergeons dismail'd,
And naked made each others manly spalles:

"Spalles," that is, shoulders. And see Fairfax, b. i. st. 72. "Vant-brace," avant-bras, armour for the arms. So, in "Troil. and Cres." a. i. s. 6, Nestor speaks:—

I'll hide my silver beard in a gold beaver,
And in my vant-brace put this wither'd brawn.

And see Fairfax, b. xx. st. 139. "Greves," armour for the legs. 1 Sam. xvii. 6:—"And he had greaves of brass upon his legs." "Gauntlet," an iron glove. "Hen. IV." p. II. a. i. s. 3, old Northumberland speaks:—

Hence therefore, thou nice crutch;
A scaly gauntlet now, with joints of steel,
Must glove this hand.—NEWTON.

Vant-brace, and greves, and gauntlet; add thy spear,
A weaver's beam [q], and seven-times-folded shield [r]:
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
And raise such outcries on thy clatter'd iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time, while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath, to boast
Again in safety what thou wouldst have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.
Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms,
Which greatest heroes have in battel worn,
Their ornament and safety, had not spells
And black enchantments, some magician's art,
Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong [s], which thou from Heaven
Feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back
Of chafed wild boars, or ruffled porcupines [t].
Sam. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts:
My trust is in the Living God, who gave me
At my nativity this strength, diffused
No less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,
Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,
The pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,

[q] *A weaver's beam.*

As the spear of Goliath was.—T. Warton.

[r] *And seven-times-folded shield.*

As was Ajax's. Ovid, Met. xiii. 2:—"Clypei dominus septemplicis."—Newton.

[s] *Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong.*

Mr. Thyer here observes, it is very probable that Milton adopted this notion from the Italian epics, who are very full of enchanted arms, and sometimes represent their heroes invulnerable by this art. But, as Mr. Warton remarks, the poet's idea is immediately and particularly taken from the ritual of the combat in chivalry. See 'Comus,' v. 647. Samson replies,—

> I know no spells, use no forbidden arts:
> My trust is in the living God.

Here, it must be observed, is a direct allusion to the oath taken before the judges of the combat by the champions:—"I do swear, that I have not upon me, nor on any of the arms I shall use, words, charms, or enchantments, to which I trust for help to conquer my enemy; but that I do only trust in God, in my right, and in the strength of my body and arms." Cockburn's "Hist. of Duels," p. 115. The poet here says "black enchantments," in like manner as Machin, introducing the same ancient oath in his "Dumb Knight," 1633. "Here you shall swear," &c.—

> That here you stand not arm'd with any guile
> Of philters, charms, of night-spells, characters,
> And other black infernal vantages.

Milton's Harapha, as Mr. Warton observes, is as much a Gothic giant as any in Amadis de Gaul; and, like a Gothic giant, engages in a just cause against a virtuous champion.—Todd.

[t] *Or ruffled porcupines.*

Who can doubt that Milton here had Shakspeare in mind? "Hamlet," a. i. s. 8:—

> And each particular hair to stand on end,
> Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.—Newton.

Go to his temple, invocate his aid
With solemnest devotion, spread before him
How highly it concerns his glory now
To frustrate and dissolve these magick spells,
Which I to be the power of Israel's God
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
Offering to combat thee his champion bold,
With the utmost of his godhead seconded:
Then thou shalt see, or rather, to thy sorrow,
Soon feel whose God is strongest, thine or mine.
  Har. Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be;
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and deliver'd up
Into thy enemies' hand, permitted them
To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades[u],
As good for nothing else; no better service
With those thy boisterous locks, no worthy match
For valour to assail, nor by the sword
Of noble warriour, so to stain his honour,
But by the barber's razor best subdued.
  Sam. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve, and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant:
In confidence whereof I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose god is God,
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.
  Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber!
  Sam. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove me these?
  Har. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confess'd it when they took thee
As a league-breaker, and deliver'd bound
Into our hands: for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then like a robber stripp'dst them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league

[u] *There to grind*
Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades.

There can be no doubt that Milton had here Apuleius's description of a pistrinum in his mind. See "Met." ix. ad init., where the ass, who is the speaker, says:—"Jam de meo jumentario contubernio quid, vel ad quem modum, memorem?"—DUNSTER.

Went up with armed powers thee only seeking,
To others did no violence nor spoil.
Sam. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe;
And in your city held my nuptial feast:
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends[v] and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who, threatening cruel death, constrain'd the bride
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,
That solved the riddle which I had proposed.
When I perceived all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, wherever chanced,
I used hostility and took their spoil,
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords;
It was the force of conquest: force with force
Is well ejected when the conquer'd can.
But I, a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed
Single rebellion, and did hostile acts.
I was no private, but a person raised
With strength sufficient, and command from Heaven,
To free my country: if their servile minds
Me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for naught,
The unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heaven assign'd,
And had perform'd it, if my known offence
Had not disabled me, not all your force:
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant[w],
Though by his blindness maim'd for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice[x] to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.
Har. With thee? a man condemn'd, a slave inroll'd,
Due by the law to capital punishment?
To fight with thee, no man of arms will deign.

[v] *Under pretence of bridal friends.*

The attendant young men at Samson's marriage are said to have belonged to his wife's family, and not to have been, as was usual, his own relations or acquaintance. Josephus relates that under the pretence of honour, they sent these thirty companions to watch over him, lest he should commit any disturbance.—TODD.

[w] *Answer thy appellant.*

Thy challenger. The defendant, in like manner, signifies the person challenged. Thus, in Shakspeare's "King Henry VI.," p. II. a. ii. s. 3:—

> This is the day appointed for the combat;
> And ready are the appellant and defendant,
> The armourer and his man.—TODD.

[x] *Who now defies thee thrice.*

This was the custom and the law of arms, to give the challenge and to sound the trumpet thrice. In allusion to the same practice, Edgar appears, to fight with the Bastard, "by the sound of the third trumpet," "King Lear," a. v. s. 7.—NEWTON.

Sam. Camest thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer; part not hence so slight inform'd;
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.
Har. O Baal-zebub[y]! can my ears unused
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?
Sam. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van:
My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.
Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.
Sam. Go, baffled coward! lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down
To the hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.
Har. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries[z], in irons loaden on thee. [*Exit.*
Cho. His giantship is gone somewhat crest-fallen,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.
Sam. I dread him not, nor all his giant brood,
Though Fame divulge him father of five sons[a],
All of gigantick size, Goliath chief.
Cho. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other, yet farther to afflict thee.
Sam. He must allege some cause, and offer'd fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not;
And, that he durst not, plain enough appear'd.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;
If they intend advantage of my labours,
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence;
The worst that he can give to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end

[y] *O Baal-zebub.*

He is properly made to invoke Baal-zebub, as afterwards to swear by Astaroth; that is, the deities of the Philistines and neighbouring nations.—NEWTON.

[z] *Ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries, &c.*

This connects Harapha with the business of the drama, by making his revenge for the threatening and contemptuous language of Samson the cause, why the latter is to be brought before the public assembly to make sport for them.—DUNSTER.

[a] *Father of five sons, &c.*

The story of Goliath of Gath is very well known; and the other four are mentioned 2 Sam. xxi. 15–22:—"These four were born to the giant [or to Harapha] in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants."—NEWTON.

Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.
Cho. O, how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppress'd,
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressour,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannick power, but raging to pursue
The righteous, and all such as honour truth!
He all their ammunition
And feats of war defeats,
With plain heroick magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour arm'd;
Their armouries and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless; while
With winged expedition,
Swift as the lightning glance, he executes
His errand on the wicked, who, surprised,
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.
But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints[b], the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endued
Above the sons of men; but sight bereaved
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.
This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands.
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,
For I descry this way
Some other tending; in his hand
A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,
Comes on amain, speed in his look.
By his habit I discern him now
A publick officer, and now at hand:
His message will be short and voluble.

Enter Officer.

Off. Hebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.
Cho. His manacles remark him; there he sits.
Off. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say:

[b] *Of saints.*
The fanatical language of the republican party.—DUNSTER.

This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games:
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
And now some publick proof thereof require
To honour this great feast and great assembly:
Rise therefore with all speed, and come along,
Where I will see thee hearten'd, and fresh clad,
To appear, as fits, before the illustrious lords.
Sam. Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore tell them,
Our law forbids at their religious rites
My presence; for that cause I cannot come.
Off. This answer, be assured, will not content them.
Sam. Have they not sword-players, and every sort
Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
Juglers, and dancers, anticks, mummers, mimicks,
But they must pick me out, with shackles tired,
And over-labour'd at their publick mill,
To make them sport with blind activity?
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
On my refusal to distress me more,
Or make a game of my calamities?
Return the way thou camest; I will not come.
Off. Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.
Sam. Myself? my conscience and internal peace.
Can they think me so broken, so debased
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
Will condescend to such absurd commands?
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
To show them feats, and play before their god,
The worst of all indignities, yet on me
Join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.
Off. My message was imposed on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?
Sam. So take it with what speed thy message needs.
Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce. [*Exit.*
Sam. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed[e].
Cho. Consider, Samson; matters now are strain'd
Up to the highth, whether to hold or break:
He's gone, and who knows how he may report
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?

[e] *Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.*
Here the catastrophe is anticipated, as before, v. 1266:—

It may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

And such anticipations are usual with the best dramatic writers, who, knowing their own plan, open it by degrees, and drop such hints as cannot be perfectly comprehended, till they are fully explained by the event. The speaker himself can only be supposed to have some general meaning, and not a distinct conception of all the particulars; somewhat like the high-priest in the Gospel, who prophesied without his knowing it.—Newton.

Expect another message more imperious,
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.
Sam. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair
After my great transgression; so requite
Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy-things to idols?
A Nazarite in place abominable
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon!
Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous!
What act more execrably unclean, profane?
Cho. Yet with this strength thou servest the Philistines,
Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.
Sam. Not in their idol-worship, but by labour
Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those, who have me in their civil power.
Cho. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.
Sam. Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds.
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,
Not dragging? the Philistian lords command.
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, venturing to displease
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
Set God behind: which in his jealousy
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense [d] with me, or thee,
Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.
Cho. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.
Sam. Be of good courage; I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along [e],
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.

[d] *Yet that he may dispense, &c.*

Milton here probably had in view the story of Naaman the Syrian begging a dispensation of this sort from Elisha, which he seemingly grants him. See 2 Kings v. 18, 19.—Thyer.

[e] *I with this messenger will go along.*

With what messenger? It was not expressly said before that the messenger was coming: it was implied indeed in what the Chorus had said:—

How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach:

and this might very well be understood by a man, who could see the messenger coming as well as the Chorus; but seems hardly a sufficient intimation to a blind man, unless we suppose him to know that the messenger was coming by the same impulse, that he felt rousing him to something extraordinary.—Newton.

But the Chorus had also said, v. 1352, after the officer is departed:—"Expect another message more imperious," &c. These words of Samson may perhaps be considered, therefore, as an expectation of the return of the officer, and his determination how to act accordingly.—Todd.

If there be aught of presage in the mind[f],
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last.
Cho. In time thou hast resolved; the man returns.
Off. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,
Our captive, at the publick mill our drudge,
And darest thou at our sending and command
Dispute thy coming? come without delay;
Or we shall find such engines to assail
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
Though thou wert firmlier fasten'd than a rock.
Sam. I could be well content to try their art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious:
Yet, knowing their advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands[g] come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection;
And for a life who will not change his purpose?
(So mutable are all the ways of men!)
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our law.
Off. I praise thy resolution: doff these links:
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.
Sam. Brethren, farewell; your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with friends; and how the sight
Of me, as of a common enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them,
I know not: lords are lordliest in their wine[h];
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
With zeal, if aught religion seem concern'd;

[f] *If there be aught of presage in the mind.*

This change of purpose, from a sudden internal presage of the mind, is magnificently imagined, and the hinge on which the whole catastrophe turns.

[g] *Masters' commands, &c.*

This was a feint; but it had betrayed itself had it not been covered by v. 1408:—

Yet this be sure, &c.—Warburton.

But this last passage must have been intended by the author to be addressed only to the Chorus; the officer certainly answers Samson's speech, as if he had not heard these words: and as to the verses 1404 and 1405 before us, they are in fact so far from being a feint, that they are marked with the most indignant spirit of irony; indeed, so palpable, as to require what follows ("And for a life," &c.) to soften it down to the messenger.—Dunster.

[h] *Lords are lordliest in their wine, &c.*

Milton here insinuates, that holy-days are of heathen institution. The passage is a concealed attack on the Church of England: but he first expresses his contempt of a nobility, and an opulent clergy, that is, lords both spiritual and temporal, who by no means coincided with his levelling and narrow principles of republicanism and Calvinism; and whom he tacitly compares with the lords and priests of the idol Dagon.—T. Warton.

No less the people, on their holy-days,
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable:
Happen what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our law, my nation, or myself,
The last of me or no I cannot warrant. [*Exit, with the* Officer.
  Cho. Go, and the Holy One[i]
Of Israel be thy guide
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
Great among the heathen round;
Send thee the angel of thy birth, to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire; that spirit, that first rush'd on thee
In the camp of Dan,
Be efficacious in thee now at need!
For never was from Heaven imparted
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old Manoah in such haste
With youthful steps? much livelier than erewhile
He seems; supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

Enter MANOAH.

  Man. Peace with you, brethren; my inducement hither
Was not at present here to find my son,
By order of the lords new parted hence
To come and play before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came; the city rings,
And numbers thither flock: I had no will,
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.
But that, which moved my coming now, was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.
  Cho. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee; say, reverend sire; we thirst to hear.
  Man. I have attempted one by one the lords
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father's tears,
To accept of ransom for my son their prisoner.
Some much averse I found and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
That part most reverenced Dagon and his priests[j]:

[i] *Go, and the Holy One.*

This, and the thirteen following lines, are in the highest strain of divine poetry; and such as no one but Milton could have written.

[j] *That part most reverenced Dagon and his priests.*

Milton, I doubt not, in this place indulges that inveterate spleen, which he always

Others more moderate seeming [k], but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and state
They easily would set to sale: a third
More generous far and civil, who confess'd
They had enough revenged; having reduced
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,
The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom were proposed.
What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky [l].
Cho. Doubtless, the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.
Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And number'd down: much rather I shall choose
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left.
No, I am fix'd, not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forego
And quit: not wanting him, I shall want nothing.
Cho. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all:
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,
Thou in old age carest how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.
Man. It shall be my delight [m] to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in the house ennobled
With all those high exploits by him achieved,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks,
That of a nation arm'd the strength contain'd;

had against public and established religion; he might also perhaps, in this description of Manoah's application for Samson's deliverance, glance at his own case after the Restoration.—THYER.

[k] *Others more moderate seeming.*

The Presbyterian party, who had joined the royalists and courtiers.—DUNSTER.

[l] *It tore the sky.*

So in 'Paradise Lost,' b. i. 542:—

A shout that tore hell's concave:

Which Pope has copied, "Iliad," xiii. 1059:—

A shout that tore heaven's concave.—TODD.

[m] *It shall be my delight, &c.*

The character of a fond parent is extremely well supported in the person of Manoah quite through the whole performance; but there is in my opinion something particularly natural and moving in this speech. The circumstance of the old man's feeding and soothing his fancy with the thoughts of tending his son, and contemplating him, ennobled with so many famous exploits, is vastly expressive of the doting fondness of an old father. Nor is the poet less to be admired for his making Manoah, under the influence of this pleasing imagination, go on still farther, and flatter himself even with the hopes of God's restoring his eyes again. Hope as naturally arises in the mind in such a situation, as doubts and fears do when it is overclouded with gloominess and melancholy.—THYER.

And I persuade me, God had not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair,
Garrison'd round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery; were not his purpose
To use him farther yet in some great service;
Not to sit idle with so great a gift
Useless, and thence ridiculous, about him.
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.
Cho. Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain
Of his delivery [n], and thy joy thereon
Conceived, agreeable to a father's love,
In both which we, as next, participate.
Man. I know your friendly minds, and—O, what noise [o]!
Mercy of heaven! what hideous noise was that?
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.
Cho. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
As if the whole inhabitation [p] perish'd!
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.
Man. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise:
O! it continues: they have slain my son.
Cho. Thy son is rather slaying them; that outcry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.
Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be:
What shall we do; stay here, or run and see?
Cho. Best keep together here, lest [q], running thither,

[n] *Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain*
Of his delivery.

This is very proper, and becoming the gravity of the Chorus, as much as to intimate that his other hopes were fond and extravagant: and the art of the poet cannot be sufficiently admired, in raising the hopes and expectations of his persons to the highest pitch, just before the dreadful catastrophe. How great and how sudden is the change from good to bad! the one renders the other more striking and effective.—NEWTON.

[o] *And—O, what noise! &c.*

It must be very pleasing to the reader to observe with what art and judgment Milton prepares him for the relation of the catastrophe of this tragedy. This abrupt start of Manoah upon hearing the hideous noise, and the description of it by the Chorus in their answer, in terms so full of dread and terror, naturally fill the mind with a presaging horror proper for the occasion: this is still kept up by their suspense and reasoning about it, and at last raised to a proper pitch by the frighted and distracted manner of the messenger's coming in, and his hesitation and backwardness in telling what had happened. What gives it the greater strength and beauty, is the sudden transition from that soothing and flattering prospect, with which Manoah was entertaining his thoughts, to a scene so totally opposite.—THYER.

Nothing can be more impressive, more calculated to excite pity, than the revolution of Samson's fate, which is now developed: for, as a learned writer observes, "while everything appears tending to his release, a horrible crash announces his destruction." See Harris's "Philolog. Inq." part ii. p. 209.—TODD.

[p] *Inhabitation.*

Οἰκουμένη.—RICHARDSON.

[q] *Best keep together here, lest, &c.*

In this passage, as is constantly the practice of Sophocles and Euripides, a reason

We unawares run into danger's mouth.
This evil on the Philistines is fallen;
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here;
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if, his eye-sight[r] (for to Israel's God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way?
Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.
Cho. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?
Man. He can, I know, but doubt to think he will;
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.
Cho. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
For evil news rides post[s], while good news baits:
And to our wish I see one hither speeding;
An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.

Enter Messenger.

Mes. O, whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold?
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason, though disturb'd, and scarce consulted,
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To thee first, reverend Manoah, and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horrour,
So in the sad event too much concerned.
Man. The accident was loud, and here before thee
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not:
No preface needs; thou seest we long to know.
Mes. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

is assigned for the Chorus continuing on the stage. There should always be a reason for the exit and entrance of every person in the drama.—Jos. Warton.

[r] *What if, his eye-sight, &c.*

The Chorus here entertains the same pleasing hope of Samson's eye-sight being by miracle restored, which he had before tacitly reproved in Manoah; and Manoah, who had before encouraged the same hope in himself, now desponds, and reckons it presumptuous in another. Such changes of our thoughts are natural and common, especially in any change of our situation and circumstances. Fear and hope usually succeed each other, like ague and fever: and it was not a slight observation of mankind that could have enabled Milton to have understood and described the human passions so exactly.—Newton.

[s] *For evil news rides post.*

So, in Statius:—

Spargitur in turmas solito pernicior index,
Cum lugenda refert.—Todd.

Man. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.
Mes. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fallen,
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fallen.
Man. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
The desolation of a hostile city.
Mes. Feed on that first: there may in grief be surfeit.
Man. Relate by whom.
Mes. By Samson.
Man. That still lessens
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.
Mes. Ah! Manoah, I refrain[t] too suddenly
To utter what will come at last too soon;
Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep.
Man. Suspense in news is torture; speak them out.
Mes. Take then the worst in brief: Samson is dead.
Man. The worst indeed! O, all my hope's defeated
To free him hence! but death, who sets all free,
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceived
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring[u],
Nipp'd with the lagging rear of winter's frost!
Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,

[t] *I refrain, &c.*

The reader cannot fail to observe and to feel the art of the poet in very gradually unfolding the catastrophe.—Jos. Warton.

[u] *Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring.*

As Mr. Thyer says, this similitude is to be admired for its remarkable justness and propriety: one cannot possibly imagine a more exact and perfect image of the dawning hope, which Manoah had conceived from the favourable answer he had met with from some of the Philistian lords, and of its being so suddenly extinguished by this return of ill fortune, than that of the early bloom, which the warmth of a few fine days frequently pushes forward in the spring, and then it is cut off by an unexpected return of winterly weather. As Mr. Warburton observes, this beautiful passage seems to be taken from Shakspeare, "Henry VIII." a. iii. s. 2:—

> This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
> The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
> And bears his blushing honours thick upon him:
> The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;
> And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
> His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root;
> And then he falls, as I do.

Upon which, Mr. Warburton remarks, that as spring-frosts are not injurious to the roots of fruit-trees, he should imagine the poet wrote "shoot;" that is, the tender shoot on which are the young leaves and blossoms. The comparison, as well as expression of "nips," is juster too in this reading. Shakspeare has the same thought in "Love's Labour's Lost:"—

> Byron is like an envious sneaping frost,
> That bites the first-born infants of the spring.—Newton.

See also "Titus Andronicus," a. iv. s. 4:—

> These tidings nip me, and I hang the head,
> As flowers with frost, or grass beat down with storms.—Todd.

I think this comparison, though poetical in itself, is out of place, as coming from Manoah in his state of distraction.

How died he; death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell, thou say'st; by whom fell he?
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?
Mes. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.
Man. Wearied with slaughter then, or how? explain.
Mes. By his own hands.
Man. Self-violence? what cause
Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes?
Mes. Inevitable cause,
At once both to destroy, and be destroy'd.
The edifice where all were met to see him,
Upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.
Man. O, lastly over-strong against thyself!
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know; but while things yet
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
Relation more particular and distinct.
Mes. Occasions drew me early to this city [v];
And as the gates I enter'd with sunrise,
The morning trumpets festival proclaim'd
Through each high street: little I had despatch'd,
When all abroad was rumour'd that this day
Samson should be brought forth to show the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games:
I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theatre
Half-round, on two main pillars vaulted high [w],
With seats, where all the lords, and each degree

[v] *Occasions drew me early to this city.*

As I observed before, that Milton had, with great art, excited the reader's attention to this grand event, so here he is no less careful to gratify it by the relation. It is circumstantial, as the importance of it required; but not so as to be tedious, or too long to delay our expectation. It would be found difficult, I believe, to retrench one article without making it defective, or to add one which should not appear redundant. The picture of Samson in particular, "with head inclined and eyes fixed," as if he was addressing himself to that God who had given him such a measure of strength, and was summing up all his force and resolution, has a very fine effect upon the imagination. Milton is no less happy in the sublimity of his description of this grand exploit, than judicious in the choice of the circumstances preceding it. The poetry rises as the subject becomes more interesting; and one may without rant or extravagance say, that the poet seems to exert no less force of genius in describing, than Samson does strength of body in executing.—THYER.

[w] *The building was a spacious theatre*
Half-round, on two main pillars vaulted high, &c.

Milton has finely accounted for this dreadful catastrophe, and has with great judgment obviated the common objection. It is commonly asked, how so great a building, containing so many thousands of people, could rest upon two pillars placed so near together; and to this it is answered, that instances are not wanting of far more large and capacious buildings than this, that have been supported only by one pillar. Particularly, Pliny, in the fifteenth chapter of the thirty-sixth book of his "Natural History," mentions two theatres built by one C. Curio, who lived in Julius Cæsar's time; each of

Of sort, might sit in order to behold;
The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand;
I among these aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
When to their sports they turn'd. Immediately
Was Samson as a publick servant brought,
In their state livery clad; before him pipes
And timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot, before him and behind,
Archers and slingers, cataphracts [x] and spears.
At sight of him, the people with a shout
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He, patient, but undaunted, where they led him,
Came to the place; and what was set before him,
Which without help of eye might be assay'd,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd
All with incredible, stupendous force;
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length for intermission sake they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
As over-tired to let him lean awhile
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the arched roof gave main support [y].

which was supported only by one pillar, or pin, or hinge, though very many thousands of people did sit in it together. See Poole's "Annotations." Mr. Thyer farther adds, that Dr. Shaw, in his "Travels," observing upon the eastern method of building, says, that the place where they exhibit their diversions at this day is an advanced cloister, made in the fashion of a large penthouse, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else at the centre; and that upon a supposition, therefore, that, in the house of Dagon, there was a cloistered structure of this kind, the pulling down the front or centre pillars only which supported it would be attended with the like catastrophe that happened to the Philistines. See Shaw's "Travels," p. 283.—NEWTON.

[x] *Cataphracts.*

That is, men and horses in armour. "Cataphracti equites dicuntur, qui et ipsi ferro muniti sunt, et equos similiter munitos habent." Servius in Virg. Æn. xi. 770. The word had been before employed in English poetry. See Lisle's "Faire Æthiopian," 4to. 1631, p. 150:—

The archers follow nimble, and arm'd light:
And after them came other bowes and slings, &c.
His strong phalanges march on either side;
And troopes of cataphracts before him ride.—TODD.

[y] *That to the arched roof gave main support.*

Milton, we see, retains, in his last production, his early attachment to this kind of ancient architecture. Thus, in his 'Ode Nativ.' st. xix., "Runs through the arched roof," &c.: again, in 'Il. Pens.' v. 157, "And love the high embowed roof:" see also 'Par. Lost,' b. i. 726, "From the arch'd roof," &c. I must observe, however, that Quarles, in his poetical "Hist. of Sampson," relates the same circumstance of the building in which Samson displayed his strength, and fell, edit. 1632, p. 378:—

Her arched roofe was all
Builded with massie stone.—TODD.

He, unsuspicious, led him; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head awhile inclined,
And eyes fast fix'd he stood[z], as one who pray'd,
Or some great matter in his mind revolved:
At last with head erect thus cried aloud:—
Hitherto, lords, what your commands imposed
I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld:
Now of my own accord such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater,
As with amaze shall strike all who behold[a].
This utter'd, straining all his nerves he bow'd:
As with the force of winds and waters pent,
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this, but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
Samson, with these immix'd, inevitably
Pull'd down the same destruction on himself;
The vulgar only 'scaped who stood without.
Cho. O dearly-bought revenge[b], yet glorious!
Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now liest victorious
Among thy slain self-kill'd,
Not willingly[c], but tangled in the fold

[z] *And eyes fast fix'd he stood.*

Samson having had his eyes put out, this only means to describe his attitude, by his countenance being fixed on the ground, as it must be when "his head was inclined." "Eyes fast fix'd" is a classical phrase.—Dunster.

[a] *As with amaze shall strike all who behold.*

I am not without a painful suspicion, that there is an intended pun in the word "strike." It too much resembles the language of the evil angels, in the sixth book of 'Paradise Lost,' on producing their artillery, and witnessing the successful effect of it.—Dunster.

[b] *O dearly-bought revenge, &c.*

It is judicious to make the Chorus and Semi-Chorus speak after this dreadful account of Samson's death, and not his father Manoah, who makes no answer till after a considerable pause; as he may be supposed to be struck dumb with the unexpected event.—Jos. Warton.

[c] *Self-kill'd,*
Not willingly.

"This suicide of Samson," says a learned author, "was of that nature, which respects not self immediately, or primarily seeks to compass its own death. Had Samson only sought his own death, he would probably have found means of destroying himself in prison, before he was brought forth to be made a show and a spectacle: but a renewal of the glory of God in the destruction of the Philistines was his principal object; which glory had been apparently violated by their general usage of his servant

Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd
Thee with thy slaughter'd foes in number more
Than all thy life had slain before[d].
  1 *Semi.* While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine[e],
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,
Chanting their idol, and preferring
Before our Living Dread who dwells
In Silo[f], his bright sanctuary;
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urged them on with mad desire,
To call in haste for their destroyer:
They, only set on sport and play,
Unweetingly importuned
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men[g],
Fallen into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves to invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.
  2 *Semi.* But he though blind of sight,
Despised, and thought extinguish'd quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,
His fiery virtue roused
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as an evening dragon came[h],

Samson, and the particular indignity they had made him suffer in the loss of his eyes. His own death was an accidental circumstance connected with his point in view, but not the first and direct aim of the action. It was necessary indeed for him to put his own life into the utmost hazard, with scarce a possibility of escape; but he cheerfully submitted to fall with his enemies, rather than not accomplish his great design." Moore's "Full Inquiry into the subject of Suicide," vol. i. p. 89.—TODD.

[d] *In number more*
Than all thy life had slain before.

"So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." Judges xvi. 30.—NEWTON.

[e] *Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine.*

This distinction of drunkenness is scriptural. See Isaiah xxix. 9.—DUNSTER.

[f] *In Silo.*

Where the tabernacle and ark were at that time.—NEWTON.

[g] *So fond are mortal men, &c.*

Agreeable to the common maxim, "Quos Deus vult perdere, dementat prius."—THYER.

[h] *And as an evening dragon came, &c.*

Mr. Calton says that Milton certainly dictated

And not as an evening dragon came.

Samson did not set upon them like an evening dragon, but darted ruin on their heads, like the thunder-bearing eagle. Mr. Sympson, to the same purpose, proposes to read,

And not as evening dragon came,
———but as an eagle, &c.

Mr. Thyer understands it otherwise, and explains it without any alteration of the text, to which I rather incline. One might produce, says he, authorities enough from the

Assailant on the perched roosts
And nests in order ranged
Of tame villatick fowl[i]: but as an eagle[j]
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So virtue, given for lost,
Depress'd and overthrown, as seem'd,
Like that self-begotten bird[k]
In the Arabian woods embost[l],
That no second knows nor third,
And lay erewhile a holocaust[m],
From out her ashy womb now teem'd,
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deem'd;
And, though her body die, her fame survives
A secular bird ages of lives[n].

naturalists, to show that serpents devour fowls: that of Aldrovandus is sufficient, and serves fully to justify this simile. Speaking of the food of serpents, he says, "Etenim aves, et potissimum avium pullos in nidis adhuc degentes libenter furantur." Aldrov. "de Serp. et Drac." lib. i. c. 3. It is common enough among the ancient poets, to meet with several similes brought in to illustrate one action, when one cannot be found that will hold in every circumstance. Milton does the same here; introducing the simile of the dragon merely in allusion to the order in which the Philistines were placed in the amphitheatre; and the subsequent one of the eagle, to express the rapidity of that vengeance which Samson took of his enemies.—NEWTON.

[i] *Villatick fowl.*

"Villaticas alites," Plin. lib. xxiii. sect. 17.—RICHARDSON.

[j] *But as an eagle, &c.*

In the "Ajax" of Sophocles, it is said, that his enemies, if they saw him appear, would be terrified like birds at the appearance of the vulture or the eagle, v. 167.—JORTIN.

Apuleius describes an eagle, "in prædam superne sese ruere, fulminis vice," "Florid." lib. i. ad init. The ancients described heroes of great prowess and activity in war as thunder-bolts. See Spanheim "De Usu et Præstantia Numismatum," Dissert. v., where he treats of the epithets bestowed on the successors of Alexander, and among others that of "thunderer."—DUNSTER.

[k] *Like that self-begotten bird.*

The introduction of the phœnix is particularly censured by Dr. Johnson. Tertullian, Ambrose, and others of the Fathers, have however cited the phœnix as a rational argument of a resurrection.—DUNSTER.

[l] *Embost.*

Probably from the Italian "emboscare," to enclose in a thicket, as Dr. Johnson observes. It appears to have been used by our old poets as a term of hunting, applied more particularly to the hart.—TODD.

[m] *A holocaust.*

An entire burnt-offering. Else, generally, only part of the beast was burnt.—RICHARDSON.

[n] *Her fame survives*
A secular bird ages of lives.

The construction and meaning of the whole period I conceive to be this:—Virtue, given for lost, like the phœnix consumed and now teemed from out her ashy womb, revives, reflourishes; and though her body die, which was the case of Samson, yet her fame survives a phœnix many ages: for the comma after "survives" in all the editions should be omitted, as Mr. Calton has observed as well as myself. The phœnix, says he, lived a thousand years according to some, and hence it is called here "a secular bird."—"Ergo quoniam sex diebus cuncta Dei opera perfecta sunt; per secula sex, id est, annorum sex millia, manere hoc statu mundum necesse est." Lactantius, "Div. Inst." lib vii. c. 14. The fame of virtue, the Semi-Chorus saith, "survives," outlives, this "secular bird" many ages. The comma, which is in all the editions after "survives," breaks the construction.—NEWTON.

Man. Come, come, no time for lamentation now [o],
Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroickly hath finish'd
A life heroick; on his enemies
Fully revenged, hath left them years of mourning,
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor [p]
Through all Philistian bounds; to Israel
Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
To himself and father's house eternal fame;
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
But favouring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears [q], nothing to wail
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body [r] where it lies
Soak'd in his enemies' blood; and from the stream,
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs, wash off
The clotted gore. I, with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay),
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends [s],
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend
With silent obsequy, and funeral train,

[o] *No time for lamentation now, &c.*

In the "Hecuba" of Euripides, Hecuba, when she is informed of the heroical death of her daughter Polyxena, after expressing her grief, corrects it with similar reflections, ver. 591.—DUNSTER.

[p] *To the sons of Caphtor.*

Caphtor it should be, and not *Chaptor*, as in several editions: and the sons of Caphtor are Philistines, originally of the island of Caphtor or Crete. The people were called Caphtorim, Cheretim, Ceretim, and afterwards Cretians. A colony of them settled in Palestine, and there went by the name of Philistim.—MEADOWCOURT.

[q] *Nothing is here for tears, &c.*

The whole of this speech of Manoah is in a high degree pleasing and interesting: from this place to the conclusion it gradually rises in beauty, so as to form one of the most captivating parts of this admirable tragedy.—DUNSTER.

[r] *Let us go find the body, &c.*

When Sarpedon is slain in the Iliad, Jupiter gives Phœbus a commission to find the body, and have all due obsequies and funeral rites paid it. See Il. xvi. 667, &c. Compare also the rites paid to the corpses of Patroclus and Hector, Il. xviii. xxiv.—DUNSTER.

[s] *Will send for all my kindred, all my friends, &c.*

This is founded upon what the Scripture saith, Judges xvi. 31, which the poet has finely improved:—"Then his brethren, and all the house of his father, came down and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Ashtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father."—NEWTON.

The poet, by "silent obsequy," in this description of the last respect intended to be paid to Samson, alludes to the custom observed at the Jewish funerals; at which all the near relations of the deceased came to the house in their mourning dress, and sat down upon the ground in silence; whilst in another part of the house were heard the voices of mourners, and the sound of instruments, hired for the purpose: these exclamations continued till the rites were performed, when the nearest relations resumed their melancholy posture.—TODD.

Home to his father's house; there will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung[t], and acts inroll'd
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort[u],
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valour, and adventures high:
The virgins also shall, on feastful days,
Visit his tomb with flowers; only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.
Cho. All is best, though we oft doubt[v]
What the unsearchable dispose
Of Highest Wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns,
And all that band them to resist
His uncontroulable intent:
His servants he, with new acquist
Of true experience, from this great event,
With peace and consolation hath dismiss'd,
And calm of mind, all passion spent[w].

[t] *With all his trophies hung.*

Chivalry was now again in Milton's mind. He might here allude to the custom of hanging the sword, helmet, and armorial ensigns over the tombs of eminent persons. — TODD.

[u] *Thither shall all the valiant youth resort.*

Mason, who was a great admirer of this tragedy, introduces Caractacus thus consoling himself over the body of his son Arviragus:—

Here in high Mona shall thy noble limbs
Rest in a noble grave; posterity
Shall to thy tomb with annual reverence bring
Sepulchral stones, and pile them to the clouds.—TODD.

[v] *All is best, though we oft doubt, &c.*

There is a great resemblance betwixt this speech of Milton's Chorus, and that of the Chorus in Æschylus's "Supplices," beginning at ver. 90, to ver. 109.—THYER.

[w] *With peace and consolation hath dismiss'd,*
And calm of mind, all passion spent.

This moral lesson in the conclusion is very fine, and excellently suited to the beginning: for Milton had chosen for the motto to this piece a passage out of Aristotle, which may show what was his design in writing this tragedy, and the sense of which he hath expressed in the preface, that "tragedy is of power, by raising pity and fear, or terrour, to purge the mind of those and such like passions," &c., and he exemplifies it here in Manoah and the Chorus, after their various agitations of passion, acquiescing in the divine dispensations, and thereby inculcating a most instructive lesson to the reader.—NEWTON.

OF the general character of this poem it may be proper to cite the opinions of my predecessors.

'Samson Agonistes' is the only tragedy that Milton finished, though he sketched out the plans of several, and proposed the subjects of more, in his manuscript preserved

in Trinity College, Cambridge: and we may suppose that he was determined to the choice of this particular subject by the similitude of his own circumstances to those of Samson blind and among the Philistines. This I conceive to be the last of his poetical pieces; and it is written in the very spirit of the ancients, and equals, if not exceeds, any of the most perfect tragedies which were ever exhibited on the Athenian stage, when Greece was in its glory. As this work was never intended for the stage, the division into acts and scenes is omittted. Bishop Atterbury had an intention of getting Pope to divide it into acts and scenes, and of having it acted at Westminster; but his commitment to the Tower put an end to that design. It has since been brought upon the stage in the form of an Oratorio; and Handel's music is never employed to greater advantage, than when it is adapted to Milton's words. That great artist has done equal justice to our author's 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso;' as if the same spirit possessed both masters, and as if the god of music and of verse was still one and the same.—NEWTON.

'Samson Agonistes' is but a very indifferent subject for a dramatic fable: however, Milton has made the best of it. He seems to have chosen it for the sake of the satire on bad wives.—WARBURTON.

It would be hardly less absurd to say, that he chose the subject of 'Paradise Lost' for the sake of describing a connubial altercation. The nephew of Milton has told us, that he could not ascertain the time when this drama was written; but it probably flowed from the heart of the indignant poet soon after his spirit had been wounded by the calamitous destiny of his friends, to which he alludes with so much energy and pathos, in the Chorus, v. 652, &c. He did not design the drama for a theatre, nor has it the kind of action requisite for theatrical interest; but in one point of view the 'Samson Agonistes' is the most singularly affecting composition that was ever produced by sensibility of heart and vigour of imagination. To give it this particular effect, we must remember, that the lot of Milton had a marvellous coincidence with that of his hero in three remarkable points: first (but we should regard this as the most inconsiderable article of resemblance), he had been tormented by a beautiful, but disaffectionate and disobedient wife; secondly, he had been the great champion of his country, and as such the idol of public admiration; lastly, he had fallen from that height of unrivalled glory, and had experienced the most humiliating reverse of fortune. In delineating the greater part of Samson's sensations under calamity, he had only to describe his own. No dramatist can have ever conformed so literally as Milton to the Horatian precept, *Si vis me flere*, &c.; and if, in reading the 'Samson Agonistes,' we observe how many passages, expressed with the most energetic sensibility, exhibit to our fancy the sufferings and real sentiments of the poet, as well as those of his hero, we may derive from this extraordinary composition a kind of pathetic delight, that no other drama can afford; we may applaud the felicity of genius, that contrived, in this manner, to relieve a heart overburdened with anguish and indignation, and to pay a half-concealed, yet hallowed tribute, to the memories of dear though dishonoured friends, whom the state of the times allowed not the afflicted poet more openly to deplore.—HAYLEY.

Dr. Johnson thought differently about this tragedy, written evidently and happily in the style and manner of Æschylus; and said, "that it was deficient in both requisites of a true Aristotelic middle. Its intermediate parts have neither cause nor consequence, neither hasten nor retard the catastrophe." To which opinion the judicious Mr. Twining accedes. What Dr. Warburton said of it is wonderfully ridiculous, that Milton "chose the subject for the sake of the satire on bad wives;" and that the subjects of 'Samson Agonistes' and 'Paradise Lost' were not very different,—"the fall of two heroes by a woman." Milton, in this drama, has given an example of every species of measure which the English language is capable of exhibiting, not only in the choruses, but in the dialogue part. The chief parts of the dialogue (though there is a great variety of measure in the choruses of the Greek tragedy) are in iambic verse. I recollect but three places in which hexameter verses are introduced in the Greek tragedies; once in the "Trachiniæ," once in the "Philoctetes" of Sophocles, and once in the "Troades" of Euripides. Voltaire wrote an opera on this subject of Samson, 1732, which was set to music by Rameau, but was never performed: he has inserted choruses to Venus and Adonis; and the piece finishes by introducing Samson actually pulling down the temple, on the stage, and crushing all the assembly, which Milton has flung into so fine a narration; and the opera is ended by Samson's saying, "J'ai réparé ma honte, et j'expire en vainqueur." And yet this was the man that dared to deride the irregularities of Shakspeare.—JOS. WARTON.

Of the style of this poem, it is to be observed that it is often inexact and almost ungrammatical; and of the metre, that it is very licentious: both with design and the most consummate judgment. An irregular construction carries with it an air of negligence, well suited to this drama, and yet prevents the expression from falling into vulgarity; and a looseness of measure gives grace and ease to the tragic dialogue: but this apology does not extend to such inaccuracies in the mask of 'Comus;' which, as a work of delight and ostentation, should have been everywhere laboured, as indeed for the most part it is, into the utmost polish of style and metre. Milton learned the secret he has here so successfully practised from his strict attention to the Greek tragedians, especially Euripides. The modern critics of this poet are perpetually tampering with his careless expression, careless numbers, &c., unconscious that both were the effect of art. It is on these occasions we may apply the observation,—

It is not Homer nods, but we that dream.

The 'Samson Agonistes' is, in every view, the most artificial and highly-finished of all Milton's poetical works.—HURD.

Dr. Warton, in a concluding note on 'Lycidas,' assigns to 'Samson Agonistes' the third place of rank among the poet's works. Lord Monboddo, still more enamoured of its excellencies, says, that it is the "last and the most faultless, in my judgment, of all Milton's poetical works, if not the finest."—"Orig. and Prog. of Language," 2d edit. vol. iii. p. 71. It is certainly, as Mr. Mason long since observed, an excellent piece, to which posterity has not yet given its full measure of popular and universal fame. "Perhaps," says this judicious writer in a letter to a friend concerning his own impressive tragedy of "Elfrida," "in your closet, and that of a few more, who unaffectedly admire genuine nature and ancient simplicity, the 'Agonistes' may hold a distinguished rank: yet surely, we cannot say, in Hamlet's phrase, 'that it pleases the million; it is still caviare to the general.'" "Elfrida," edit. 1752, Lett. ii. p. vi. vii.—TODD.

Dr. Johnson has criticised in the "Rambler," No. 139, 140, 'Samson Agonistes' as wanting a middle, though he allows it a beginning and an end. He says:—"The tragedy of 'Samson Agonistes' has been celebrated as the second work of the great author of 'Paradise Lost,' and opposed with all the confidence of triumph to the dramatic performances of other nations. It contains indeed just sentiments, maxims of wisdom, and oracles of piety, and many passages written with the ancient spirit of choral poetry, in which there is a just and pleasing mixture of Seneca's moral declamation with the wild enthusiasm of the Greek writers: it is therefore worthy of examination, whether a performance thus illuminated with genius and enriched with learning, is composed according to the indispensable laws of Aristotelian criticism; and, omitting at present all other considerations, whether it exhibits a beginning, a middle, and an end.

"The poem has a beginning and an end which Aristotle himself could not have disapproved; but it must be allowed to want a middle, since nothing passes between the first act and the last, that either hastens or delays the death of Samson. The whole drama, if its superfluities were cut off, would scarcely fill a single act; yet this is the tragedy which ignorance has admired, and bigotry applauded.

"Such are the faults, and such the beauties of 'Samson Agonistes;' which I have shown with no other purpose than to promote the knowledge of true criticism. The everlasting verdure of Milton's laurels has nothing to fear from the blasts of malignity; nor can such attempt produce any other effect than to strengthen their shoots by lopping their luxuriance."

Cumberland, in his "Observer," vol. iv. No. 111, very properly defends the middle of this drama against Johnson's attack. He contends that the captious critic has misunderstood Aristotle's rule; and concludes thus:—

"Of the character, I may say in few words, that 'Samson' possesses all the terrific majesty of 'Prometheus Chained,' the mysterious distress of 'Œdipus,' and the pitiable wretchedness of 'Philoctetes.' His properties, like those of the first, are something above human; his misfortunes, like those of the second, are derivable from the pleasure of Heaven, and involved in oracles; his condition, like that of the last, is the most abject which human nature can be reduced to from a state of dignity and splendour.

"Of the catastrophe, there remains only to remark, that it is of unparalleled majesty and terror."

COMUS;

A Mask,

PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634,

BEFORE

JOHN, EARL OF BRIDGEWATER,

THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES.

LUDLOW CASTLE.

TODD has given a copious historical account of this castle, which I shall omit. It had long been the palace of the princes of Wales, and was inhabited by Prince Arthur, eldest son of Henry VII.; it was built by Roger de Montgomery, about 1112. Sir Henry Sidney, when Lord President of Wales, expended large sums upon this building. The castle was delivered to the Parliament in 1646; the court of marches was afterwards abolished, and the lords presidents discontinued in 1688: from that time the castle fell into decay.

JOHN, EARL OF BRIDGEWATER.

THE family of Egerton is of the most undoubted antiquity, and was one of the first of the rank of commoners in Cheshire, being among the barons of the earl palatine of the county at the Conquest. The Cholmondeleys are from the same male stock: the male line of the eldest branch of the family still survives in Sir Philip de Malpas Egerton, Bart., but the founder of the nobility of the Bridgewater branch was Lord Chancellor Egerton, born about 1540. He was a natural son of Sir Richard Egerton of Ridley, who died 1579, son of Sir Ralph Egerton of Ridley in Cheshire, standard-bearer of England, by an heiress of one of the Bassets of Blore, in the county of Stafford*. Sir Thomas Egerton was made Solicitor-General, 2nd June, 1581; Attorney-General, 2nd June, 1592; Master of the Rolls, 10th April, 36 Eliz.; Lord Keeper, 6th May, 1596; created Baron of Ellesmere, 21st July, 1603, by King James, and three days afterwards constituted Lord High Chancellor of England; advanced to the dignity of Viscount Brackley, 7th November, 1616; and died full of years and honours, at the age of seventy-seven, on the 15th of March, 1617, and was buried at Doddleston, in the county of Cheshire†.

This is not the place to enter into a long examination of this celebrated man's public character. The late Francis Henry Egerton, the last Earl of Bridgewater,

* The last heiress of the elder branch of the Bassets of Blore married William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, whose daughter by her married John Egerton, second Earl of Bridgewater.
The ancestor of these Bassets married the heiress of the elder branch of the Byrons. In the church of Blore was the brass-plate recording this marriage, when I visited that church in autumn, 1789.

† By some extraordinary neglect, no memorial was erected over this great man's remains, till the present learned, accomplished, and amiable Archdeacon Wrangham, the rector of the parish, placed an epitaph at his own expense.

who died in 1829, printed in folio a large collection of materials for his life, of which a great part have been introduced into the last edition of the "Biographia Britannica." He was a man remarkable for discretion, sagacity, and wisdom in perilous times. He was the founder of the present system of equity in chancery; and his contest with Chief Justice Coke, and triumph over the great learning and abilities of that bad-tempered man, is alone matter of high fame. In all the pages of history which have gained any credit, his reputation stands bright and clear: he accumulated a large fortune for his posterity, which was vastly augmented by the illustrious marriage which his son made with Lady Frances Stanley, daughter and coheir of Ferdinando, Earl of Derby, and the Lady Alice, before whom Milton's 'Arcades' was acted.

This son John, second Viscount Brackley, was created Earl of Bridgewater 27th May, 1617, two months after his father's death. From this time, this earl was by his marriage lifted at once to the very first and most illustrious rank of nobility. The blood of the Stanleys, Cliffords, Brandons, Wodevilles, Tudors, and Plantagenets, all centred in his children.

In 1631 he was appointed Lord President of Wales. "I have been informed from a manuscript of Oldys," says Mr. Warton, "that Lord Bridgewater, being appointed Lord President of Wales, entered upon his official residence at Ludlow castle with great solemnity: on this occasion he was attended by a large concourse of the neighbouring nobility and gentry. Among the rest came his children; in particular, Lord Brackley, Mr. Thomas Egerton, and Lady Alice,

> To attend their father's state
> And new-entrusted sceptre.

They had been on a visit at a house of their relations, the Egerton family in Herefordshire; and in passing through Haywood forest were benighted, and the Lady Alice was even lost for a short time. This accident, which in the end was attended with no bad consequences, furnished the subject of a mask for a Michaelmas festivity, and produced 'Comus.' Lord Bridgewater was appointed [rather, as I apprehend, installed] Lord President, May 12, 1633. When the perilous adventure in Haywood forest happened, if true, cannot now be told; it must have been soon after. The mask was acted at Michaelmas, 1634.' Sir John Hawkins has also observed, that this elegant poem is founded on a real story; his account of which, though less particular, agrees with that of Oldys. "Hist. of Music," vol. iv. p. 52. Lawes, in his dedication to Lord Brackley, perhaps alludes to the accident, in stating that the "poem received its first occasion of birth from himself, and others of his noble family."

This first Earl of Bridgewater died 4th December, 1649, aged seventy: his countess died 11th March, 1635-6, aged fifty-two*.

Of Lady Alice Egerton, the youngest daughter, Warton has given an account.

John Egerton, second Earl of Bridgewater, was the Elder Brother in 'Comus,' under the name of Lord Brackley: he was a man of literature, very studious, very accomplished, and very amiable. Sir Henry Chauncey, in his "History of Hertfordshire," has given a very interesting and attractive character, and a lively description of his person. He died 26th October, 1686, aged sixty-four; he was consequently born in 1622. He married Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, daughter of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, a lady of incomparable beauty, talents, and virtue; of whose "Prayers and Meditations," a manuscript copy has descended to me†. She died 14th June, 1663, aged thirty-seven.

In the epitaphs of these two generations, at Little Gadsden, near Ashridge, there is a singular strain of plaintive eloquence.

* His daughter, Lady Catherine, married William Courteen, Esq., son and heir of Sir William Courteen, knight, a merchant of London. See the curious and elaborate lives of the Courteens, in the last edition of the "Biographia Britannica." The last of them took the name of Charlton, and was a man of scientific fame.

† It is particularised in Todd, p. 208, from my communication.

The Earl's affection for his wife, and regret for her loss, even till his death * were extreme †.

John, third Earl of Bridgewater, died 23rd May, 1716, aged sixty-one.

His son Scroop, fourth earl, having married Lady Elizabeth Churchill, one of the coheirs of the famous John, Duke of Marlborough, was raised to a dukedom 18th June, 1720: she died however in her twenty-sixth year, before this promotion, on 22nd March, 1714. The duke died 11th January, 1745; his eldest son John, by his marriage with Lady Rachel Russell, succeeded, and died 26th February, 1748, aged twenty-one. He was succeeded by his only brother, Francis, third and last duke, who died unmarried, 1803, aged sixty-seven. This was the celebrated founder of canal navigation.

General John William Egerton, grandson of Henry, Bishop of Hereford, who died 1746, fifth son of John, third Earl of Bridgewater, succeeded to the earldom. His father was Bishop of Durham, and married, in 1748, Lady Anne Sophia Gray, daughter of Henry, last Duke of Kent of that family: he died 1823, and was succeeded by his brother, the Rev. Francis Henry Egerton, who died at Paris, unmarried, 1829.

Lady Louisa Egerton ‡, born 30th April, 1723, sister of the whole blood to the last Duke of Bridgewater, married 28th March, 1748, Granville Levison, afterwards Earl Gower, and created Marquis of Stafford, whose son by her, the second Marquis of Stafford, was latterly created Duke of Sutherland, and was father of the present Duke of Sutherland and of Lord Francis Gower, on whom the Duke of Bridgewater entailed a large portion of his immense property, in consequence of which he has now assumed the name of Egerton.

Sophia Egerton, sister of the last two earls, married Sir Abraham Hume, Bart., and left two daughters, of whom one married the Earl of Brownlow, and was mother of the present Lord Alfred; and the other married Mr. Charles Long, created Lord Farnborough; but without issue.

I would not have gone into these dry genealogical details, if the title had not now disappeared from the modern peerages.

On the illustrious founder of canal navigation, a great national benefactor, it is unnecessary to enlarge: perhaps he did not take the literary turn of his ancestors, which, if not more useful, would have been more congenial to the pursuits which I admire. He was a man of retired, and somewhat eccentric habits; and wrapped up exclusively in the mighty works which he was meditating, and carrying on. He was not a man of visionary talents; and cared little, I believe, about the history of his ancestors, or the glories of past times: he felt no interest in the curious library §, amassed by his forefathers, nor in the long galleries of the portraits of the great chancellor's Elizabethan contemporaries. His ancient mansion of Ashridge, which before the Reformation had been a monastery, he suffered to fall to decay, inhabiting only a few rooms in the porter's lodge ‖.

* See, in "Censura Literaria," an account of George Wither's "Hallelujah," with the manuscript notes of this Earl's own copy.

† I have mentioned the funeral certificate by the heralds: their inaccuracy is always proverbial. The earl survived his son Thomas a year; yet though the son's marriage and issue are given, no notice is taken of his death. I found it in a memorandum in an account-book of his widow. Afterwards I found, by Clutterbuck's "History of Hertfordshire," that he was buried at Little Gadsden, in the family vault. His widow, Esther Busby, survived till 1724.

‡ The first Duke of Bridgewater had a daughter by his first lady, who first married Wriothesly Russell, third Duke of Bedford, who died 1732, without issue; and afterwards William Villiers, Earl of Jersey, from which marriage the present Earl of Jersey is descended.

§ From the use of this library Mr. Todd derived a great part of his bibliographical knowledge in old English poetry, and of the predecessors and contemporaries of Milton: many of the volumes had probably gone through the hands of the illustrious poet.

‖ I visited it in August, 1789, and took a hasty list of the portraits. See "Topographer," 1789, 1790, 8vo. four vols.

General John Egerton, who succeeded to the earldom and ancient portion of the Bridgewater estates, inherited none of the old family love of literature. He was of manners chillingly cold, and a reserved pride, mixed with something of concealed sarcasm, which was apt to give great offence: he piqued himself upon his proprieties, and would never do anything out of rule or fashion: he rebuilt the mansion of Ashridge most magnificently, but was fond of money, and over-thrifty in many of his habits. He never had any children, but left the principal property to his widow for her life, who still enjoys it.

His brother and successor, Francis Henry Egerton, was prebendary of Durham, and rector of the rich family living of Whitchurch in Shropshire. For about twenty of the last years of his life he resided at Paris, having bought the grand hotel of the Ducs de Noailles, between the Rue St. Honoré and the Rue de Rivoli, where he lived at a great expense, and in much pomp. He was a strange man, the reverse of his brother: an admirable classical scholar, a great lover of books, with many flashes of genius, and fitful acts of generosity and munificence: in short, many of his habits were so singular as only to be accounted for by the obliquities of mental disease. By his will he became a public benefactor, enriching the library of the British Museum, and leaving a large sum to be expended in the authorship and publication of what have since appeared under the title of the "Bridgewater Treatises." He delighted in the history of his family, and the glory of his ancestors; he caused to be printed a translation of 'Comus' in Italian verse; and was at the expense of many other privately-printed gifts to literature. It cannot be denied that he was both vain and proud: but let his learning, his talents, and acts of public benefit veil his foibles.

Lord Francis Gower, now Egerton, who represents and possesses a magnificent portion of the Bridgewater property, with the library, splendid collection of pictures, and other reliques, embellishes his descent by his literary accomplishments, his genius, and his devotion to the muses.

Thus has passed away the male line of this illustrious family*. The length of Mr. Todd's note, in his Milton, upon the subject, has set me an example which will apologise for my substituting in its room another which fills less space. Considering the early connexion of Milton with this house, and that hence came the exquisite mask of 'Comus,' I venture to hope that it will not be deemed irrelevant. Descent is nothing unless it stimulates to accomplish the mind with high decorations, to nurse high pursuits, and to cherish high emotions of the heart. Who sleeps upon his honours—who relies only on reflected glory,—is an imbecile and culpable cipher.

* I believe that only five males are now living, who are half-Egertons, viz., whose mothers were Egertons, of whom my brother and myself are two. Lord Francis is only an Egerton by his paternal grandmother; the same is the case with Mr. Egerton of Tatton.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE[a] JOHN LORD VISCOUNT BRACLY,

SON AND HEIR APPARENT TO THE EARL OF BRIDGEWATER, &c.[b]

My Lord,

This poem, which received its occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a finall dedication of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the author[c], yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely, and so much desired, that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my severall friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the publike view; and now to offer it up in all rightfull devotion to those fair hopes, and rare endowments of your much promising youth, which give a full assurance, to all that know you, of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name, and receive this as your own, from the hands of him, who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured parents; and as in this representation your attendant Thyrsis, so now in all reall expression

Your faithfull and most humble servant,

H. Lawes[d].

[a] This is the dedication to Lawes's edition of the Mask, 1637, to which the following motto was prefixed, from Virgil's second Eclogue:—

Eheu! quid volui misero mihi? floribus austrum
Perditus—

This motto is omitted by Milton himself in the editions of 1645 and 1673.—T. Warton.

This motto is delicately chosen, whether we consider it as being spoken by the author himself, or by the editor. If by the former, the meaning, I suppose, is this:—"I have, by giving way to this publication, let in the breath of public censure on these early blossoms of my poetry, which were before secure in the hands of my friends, as in a private enclosure." If we suppose it to come from the editor, the application is not very different; only to *floribus* we must then give an encomiastic sense. The choice of such a motto, so far from vulgar in itself, and in its application, was worthy Milton.—Hurd.

[b] The first brother in the Mask.—T Warton.

[c] It never appeared under Milton's name till the year 1645.—T. Warton.

[d] This dedication does not appear in the edition of Milton's poems, printed in 1673, when Lord Brackley, under the title of Earl of Bridgewater, was still living. Milton was perhaps unwilling to own his early connexions with a family, conspicuous for its unshaken loyalty, and now highly patronised by King Charles II – T. Warton.

Milton in his edition of 1673 omitted also the letter written by Sir Henry Wootton: yet it has not been supposed that, by withdrawing the letter, he intended any disrespect to the memory of his learned friend; nor might the dedication perhaps have been withdrawn through any unwillingness to own his early connexions with the Egerton family: it might have been inexpedient for him at that time openly to avow them; but he would not, I think, forget them. He had lived in the neighbourhood of Ashridge, the seat of the Earl of Bridgewater; for his father's house and lands at Horton, near Colnbrook, in Buckinghamshire, were held under the earl, before whom 'Comus' was acted. Milton afterwards lived in Barbican, where the earl had great property, as well as his town residence, Bridgewater-house: and though Dr. Johnson observes that Milton "had taken a larger house in Barbican for the reception of scholars," it is not improbable that he might have been accommodated with it rent-free, by that nobleman, who, it may be supposed, would gladly embrace an opportunity of having in his neighbourhood the admirable author of 'Comus,' and of promoting his acquaintance with that finished scholar, who, being "willing," says his nephew Phillips, "to impart his learning and knowledge to his relations, and the sons of gentlemen who were his intimate friends," might afford to his family at least the pleasure of his conversation, if not to some of them the advantage of his instruction. This dedication does not appear in Tickell's and Fenton's editions of Milton's poetical works. It was restored by Dr. Newton.—Todd.

Henry Lawes, who composed the music for 'Comus,' and performed the combined characters of the Spirit and the shepherd Thyrsis in this drama, was the son of Thomas Lawes, a vicar choral of Salisbury cathedral: he was perhaps at first a choir-boy of that church. With his brother William, he was educated in music under Giovanni Coperario (supposed by Fenton, in his notes on Waller, to be an Italian, but really an Englishman under the plain name of John Cooper), at the expense of

THE COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY SIR HENRY WOOTTON, TO THE AUTHOR, UPON THE FOLLOWING POEM.

From the Colledge, this 13. of April, 1638[e].

SIR,

IT was a special favour, when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer than to make me know that I wanted more time to value it, and to enjoy it rightly; and in truth, if I could then have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr. H.[f], I would have been bold, in our vulgar phrase, to mend my draught (for you left me with an extreme thirst), and to have begged your conversation again, jointly with your said learned friend, at a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together som good authors of the ancient time; among which, I observed you to have been familiar.

Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations, both for a very kinde letter from you dated the sixth of this month, and for a dainty peece of entertainment which came therwith: wherin I should much commend the tragical part[g], if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dorique delicacy in your songs and odes; wherunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: *ipsa mollities*[h]. But I must not omit to tell you, that I now onely

Edward, Earl of Hertford. In January, 1625, he was appointed pistoler, or epistoler, of the royal chapel; in November following he became one of the gentlemen of the choir of that chapel; and soon afterwards, clerk of the cheque, and one of the court-musicians to King Charles I.

Cromwell's usurpation put an end to masks and music: and Lawes, being dispossessed of all his appointments, by men who despised and discouraged the elegances and ornaments of life, chiefly employed that gloomy period in teaching a few young ladies to sing and play on the lute. Yet he was still greatly respected: for before the troubles began, his irreproachable life, ingenuous deportment, engaging manners, and liberal connexions, had not only established his character, but raised even the credit of his profession. Wood says, that his most beneficent friends, during his sufferings for the royal cause, in the rebellion and afterwards, were the ladies Alice and Mary, the Earl of Bridgewater's daughters before mentioned; but in the year 1660, he was restored to his places and practice; and had the happiness to compose the coronation anthem for the exiled monarch. He died in 1662, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Of all the testimonies paid to his merit by his contemporaries, Milton's commendation in the thirteenth Sonnet, and in some of the speeches of 'Comus,' must be esteemed the most honourable; and Milton's praise is likely to be founded on truth. Milton was no specious or occasional flatterer: and at the same time was a skilful performer on the organ, and a judge of music; and it appears probable, that even throughout the rebellion he had continued his friendship for Lawes; for, long after the king was restored, he added the Sonnet to Lawes in the new edition of his Poems, printed under his own direction, in 1673. Nor has our author only complimented Lawes's excellences in music; for in 'Comus,' having said that Thyrsis, with his "soft pipe," and "smooth-dittied song," could "still the roaring winds and hush the waving woods," he adds, v. 88, "nor of less faith:" and he joins his worth with his skill, Son. xiii. v. 5.—TODD.

[e] *April*, 1638. Milton had communicated to Sir Henry his design of seeing foreign countries, and had sent him his 'Mask.' He set out on his travels soon after the receipt of this letter. See the account of his life.—TODD.

[f] *Mr. H.* Mr. Warton, in his first edition of 'Comus,' says that Mr. H. was "perhaps Milton's friend, Samuel Hartlib, whom I have seen mentioned in some of the pamphlets of this period, as well acquainted with Sir Henry Wootton:" but this is omitted in the second edition. Mr. Warton perhaps doubted his conjecture of the person. I venture to state, from a copy of the "Reliquiæ Wottonianæ" in my possession, in which a few notes are written (probably soon after the publication of the book, 3rd edit. in 1672), that the person intended was the "ever memorable" John Hales. This information will be supported by the reader's recollecting Sir Henry's intimacy with Mr. Hales: of whom Sir Henry says, in one of his letters, that he gave to his learned friend the title of *bibliotheca ambulans*, "the walking library." See "Reliq. Wotton." 3rd edit. p. 475.—TODD.

[g] *The tragical part.* Sir Henry, now provost of Eton College, was himself a writer of English odes, and with some degree of elegance: he had also written a tragedy, while a young student at Queen's College, Oxford, called "Tancredo," acted by his fellow-students. See his "Life," by Walton, p. 11. He was certainly a polite scholar, but on the whole a mixed and desultory character: he was now indulging his studious and philosophical propensities at leisure. Milton, when this letter was written, lived but a few miles from Eton.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Ipsa mollities.* Thus Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess" is characterised by Cartwright, "where softness reigns," Poems p. 209, ed. 1651. But Sir Henry's conceptions did not reach to the higher

owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer. For the work itself I had viewed som good while before with singular delight, having received it from our common friend Mr. R.[i] in the very close of the late R.'s poems, printed at Oxford, wherunto it is added (as I now suppose) that the accessory might help out the principal, according to the art of stationers, and to leave the reader *con la bocca dolce.*

Now, sir, concerning your travels, wherin I may chalenge a little more priviledge of discours with you; I suppose you will not blanch Paris in your way; therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. M. B.[j], whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord S.[k], as his governour; and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your farther journey into Italy, where he did reside by my choice som time for the king, after mine own recess from Venice.

I should think that your best line would be thorow the whole length of France to Marseilles, and thence by sea to Genoa, whence the passage into Tuscany is as diurnal as a Gravesend barge: I hasten, as you do, to Florence, or Sienna, the rather to tell you a short story from the interest you have given me in your safety.

At Sienna I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipioni, an old Roman courtier in dangerous times, having bin steward to the Duca di Pagliano, who with all his family were strangled, save this onely man that escaped by foresight of the tempest: with him I had often much chat of those affairs; into which he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour; and at my departure toward Rome (which had been the centre of his experience) I had wonn confidence enough to beg his advice, how I might carry myself securely there, without offence of others, or of mine own conscience. *Signor*[l] *Arrigo mio,* sayes he, *i pensieri stretti, et il viso sciolto,* will go safely over the whole world; of which Delphian oracle (for so I have found it) your judgment doth need no commentary; and therefore, sir, I will commit you with it to the best of all securities, God's dear love, remaining

Your Friend as much at command as any of longer date,

HENRY WOOTTON[m].

POSTSCRIPT.

SIR,—I have expressly sent this my foot-boy to prevent your departure without som acknowledgement from me of the receipt of your obliging Letter, having my self through som busines, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance. In any part where I shall understand you fixed, I shall be glad, and diligent, to entertain you with home novelties; even for som fomentation of our friendship, too soon interrupted in the cradle[n].

poetry of 'Comus:' he was rather struck with the pastoral mellifluence of its lyric measures, which he styles "a certain Dorique delicacy in the songs and odes," than with its graver and more majestic tones, with the solemnity and variety of its peculiar vein of original invention. This drama was not to be generally characterised by its songs and odes: nor do I know that softness and sweetness, although they want neither, are particularly characteristical of those passages, which are most commonly rough with strong and crowded images, and rich in personification. However, the song to Echo, and the initial strains of Comus's invitation, are much in the style which Wootton describes.—T. WARTON.

[i] *Mr. R.* I believe "Mr. R." to be John Rouse, Bodley's librarian. "The late R." is unquestionably Thomas Randolph, the poet.—T. WARTON.

[j] *Mr. M. B.* Mr. Michael Branthwaite, as I suppose; of whom Sir Henry thus speaks in one of his letters, "Reliq. Wotton." 3rd edit. p. 546:—"Mr. Michael Branthwaite, heretofore his Majestic's agent in Venice, a gentleman of approved confidence and sincerity."—TODD.

[k] *Lord S.* The son of Lord Viscount Scudamore, then the English ambassador at Paris, by whose notice Milton was honoured, and by whom he was introduced to Grotius, then residing at Paris also, as the minister of Sweden.—TODD.

[l] *Signor, &c.* Sir Henry seems to have been very fond of recommending this advice to his friends, who were about to travel. See "Reliq. Wotton." 3rd edit. p. 356, where he relates to another correspondent his intimacy with Scipioni, and his maxim, "*Gli pensieri stretti, et il viso sciolto:* that is, as I used to translate it, 'Your thoughts close, and your countenance loose.' This was that moral antidote which I imparted to Mr. B. and his fellow-travellers, having a particular interest in their well-doings." Milton, however, neglecting to observe the maxim, incurred great danger, by disputing against the superstition of the church of Rome within the verge of the Vatican.—TODD.

[m] Milton mentions this letter of Sir Henry Wootton for its elegance, in his 'Defensio secunda Populi Anglicani.'—T. WARTON.

[n] *In the cradle.* He should have said "in its cradle." See the beginning of the letter.—T. WARTON.

ORIGIN OF COMUS.

In Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," an Arcadian comedy recently published, Milton found many touches of pastoral and superstitious imagery, congenial with his own conceptions: many of these, yet with the highest improvements, he has transferred into 'Comus;' together with the general cast and colouring of the piece. He catched also from the lyric rhymes of Fletcher, that Doric delicacy, with which Sir Henry Wootton was so much delighted in the songs of Milton's drama. Fletcher's comedy was coldly received the first night of its performance: but it had ample revenge in this conspicuous and indisputable mark of Milton's approbation: it was afterwards represented as a mask at court, before the king and queen on Twelfth Night, in 1633. I know not, indeed, if this was any recommendation to Milton; who, in the 'Paradise Lost,' speaks contemptuously of these interludes, which had been among the chief diversions of an elegant and liberal monarch, b. iv. 767:—

court-amours,
Mix'd dance and wanton mask, or midnight ball, &c.

And in his 'Ready and easy Way to establish a free Commonwealth,' written in 1660, on the inconveniences and dangers of readmitting kingship, and with a view to counteract the noxious humour of returning to bondage, he says, "A king must be adored as a demi-god, with a dissolute and haughty court about him, of vast expense and luxury, masks and revels, to the debauching our prime gentry, both male and female, not in their pastimes only," &c., "Pr. W." i. 590. I believe the whole compliment was paid to the genius of Fletcher: but in the mean time it should be remembered, that Milton had not yet contracted an aversion to courts and court amusements; and that in 'L'Allegro,' masks are among his pleasures: nor could he now disapprove of a species of entertainment, to which, as a writer, he was giving encouragement. The royal masks did not, however, like 'Comus,' always abound with Platonic recommendations of the doctrine of chastity.

The ingenious and accurate Mr. Reed has pointed out a rude outline, from which Milton seems partly to have sketched the plan of the fable of 'Comus.' See "Biograph. Dramat." ii. p. 441. It is an old play, with this title, "The Old Wives Tale, a pleasant conceited Comedie, plaied by the Queenes Maiesties players. Written by G. P. [i. e. George Peele.] Printed at London by John Danter, and are to be sold by Ralph Hancocke and John Hardie, 1595." In quarto. This very scarce and curious piece exhibits, among other parallel incidents, two brothers wandering in quest of their sister, whom an enchanter had imprisoned. This magician had learned his art from his mother Meroe, as Comus had been instructed by his mother Circe: the brothers call out on the lady's name, and Echo replies: the enchanter had given her a potion which suspends the powers of reason, and superinduces oblivion of herself: the brothers afterwards meet with an old man who is also skilled in magic; and, by listening to his soothsayings, they recover their lost sister; but not till the enchanter's wreath had been torn from his head, his sword wrested from his hand, a glass broken, and a light extinguished. The names of some of the characters, as Sacrapant, Chorebus, and others, are taken from the "Orlando Furioso." The history of Meroe, a witch, may be seen in "The xi Bookes of the Golden Asse, containing the Metamorphosie of Lucius Apuleius, interlaced with sundrie pleasant and delectable Tales, &c. Translated out of Latin into English by William Adlington, Lond. 1566." See

chap. iii. "How Socrates in his return from Macedony to Larissa was spoyled and robbed, and how he fell acquainted with one Meroe a witch." And chap. iv. "How Meroe the witch turned divers persons into miserable beasts." Of this book there were other editions, in 1571, 1596, 1600, and 1639, all in quarto and the black letter. The translator was of University-college. See also Apuleius in the original. A Meroe is mentioned by Ausonius, Epigr. xix.

Peele's play opens thus:—Anticke, Frolicke, and Fantasticke, three adventurers, are lost in a wood, in the night. They agree to sing the old song,—

Three merrie men, and three merrie men,
And three merrie men be wee;
I in the wood, and thou on the ground,
And Jack sleeps in the tree.

They hear a dog, and fancy themselves to be near some village. A cottager appears, with a lantern: on which Frolicke says, "I perceiue the glimryng of a gloworme, a candle, or a cat's-eye," &c. They intreat him to show the way; otherwise, they say, "wee are like to wander among the owlets and hobgoblins of the forest." He invites them to his cottage; and orders his wife to "lay a crab in the fire, to rost for lambes-wool," &c. They sing:—

When as the rie reach to the chin,
And chop cherrie, chop cherrie ripe within;
Strawberries swimming in the creame,
And schoole-boyes playing in the streame, &c.

At length, to pass the time trimly, it is proposed that the wife shall tell "a merry winters tale," or, "an old wiues winters tale;" of which sort of stories she is not without a score. She begins:—There was a king, or duke, who had a most beautiful daughter, and she was stolen away by a necromancer; who, turning himself into a dragon, carried her in his mouth to his castle. The king sent out all his men to find his daughter; "at last, all the king's men went out so long, that hir Two Brothers went to seeke hir." Immediately the two brothers enter, and speak,—

First. Br. Vpon these chalkie cliffs of Albion,
We are arriued now with tedious toile, &c.
To seek our sister, &c

A soothsayer enters, with whom they converse about the lost lady. *Sooths.* Was she fayre? *2nd Br.* The fayrest for white and the purest for redde, as the blood of the deare or the driven snowe, &c. In their search, Echo replies to their call: they find, too late, that their sister is under the captivity of a wicked magician, and that she had tasted his cup of oblivion. In the close, after the wreath is torn from the magician's head, and he is disarmed and killed by a spirit in the shape and character of a beautiful page of fifteen years old, she still remains subject to the magician's enchantment: but in a subsequent scene the spirit enters, and declares, that the sister cannot be delivered but by a lady, who is neither maid, wife, nor widow. The spirit blows a magical horn, and the lady appears; she dissolves the charm by breaking a glass, and extinguishing a light, as I have before recited. A curtain is withdrawn, and the sister is seen seated and asleep: she is disenchanted and restored to her senses, having been spoken to thrice: she then rejoins her two brothers, with whom she returns home; and the boy-spirit vanishes under the earth. The magician is here called "inchanter vile," as in 'Comus,' v. 907.

There is another circumstance in this play, taken from the old English "Apuleius." It is where the old man every night is transformed by our magician into a bear, recovering in the day-time his natural shape.

Among the many feats of magic in this play, a bride newly married gains a marriage-portion by dipping a pitcher into a well: as she dips, there is a voice:—

Faire maiden, white and redde,
Combe me smoothe, and stroke my head,
And thou shall haue some cockell bread!
Gently dippe, but not too deepe,
For feare thou make the golden beard to weepe!

Faire maiden, white and redde,
Combe me smoothe, and stroke my head;
And euery haire a sheaue shall be,
And euery sheaue a golden tree!

With this stage-direction, "A head comes vp full of gold; she combes it into her lap."

I must not omit, that Shakspeare seems also to have had an eye on this play. It is in the scene where "The haruest-men enter with a song." Again, "Enter the haruest-men singing, with women in their handes." Frolicke says, "Who have we here, our amourous haruest-starres?" They sing:—

Loe, here we come a reaping, a reaping,
To reape our haruest-fruite;
And thus we passe the yeare so long,
And neuer be we mute.

Compare the mask in the "Tempest," a. iv. s. 1, where Iris says:—

You sun-burnt sicklemen, of August weary,
Come hither from the furrow, and be merry;
Make holy-day: your rye-straw hats put on,
And these fresh nymphs encounter every one
In country footing.

Where is this stage-direction:—"Enter certain reapers, properly habited: they join with the nymphs in a graceful dance." The "Tempest" probably did not appear before the year 1612.

That Milton had his eye on this ancient drama, which might have been the favourite of his early youth, perhaps may be at least affirmed with as much credibility, as that he conceived the 'Paradise Lost' from seeing a mystery at Florence, written by Andreini a Florentine in 1617, entitled "Adamo."

In the mean time, it must be confessed, that Milton's magician Comus, with his cup and wand, is ultimately founded on the fable of Circe. The effects of both characters are much the same: they are both to be opposed at first with force and violence. Circe is subdued by the virtues of the herb moly which Mercury gives to Ulysses, and Comus by the plant hæmony which the spirit gives to the two brothers. About the year 1615, a mask, called the "Inner Temple Masque," written by William Browne, author of "Britannia's Pastorals," which I have frequently cited, was presented by the students of the Inner Temple: lately printed from a manuscript in the library of Emmanuel College: but I have been informed, that a few copies were printed soon after the presentation. It was formed on the story of Circe, and perhaps might have suggested some few hints to Milton. I will give some proofs of parallelism as we go along. The genius of the best poets is often determined, if not directed, by circumstance and accident. It is natural, that even so original a writer as Milton should have been biassed by the reigning poetry of the day, by the composition most in fashion, and by subjects recently brought forward, but soon giving way to others, and almost as soon totally neglected and forgotten.—T. Warton.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

'COMUS' is perhaps more familiar to the modern English reader than any other poems of Milton, except 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso;' its poetical merits are generally felt and acknowledged: its visionary and picturesque inventiveness give it a full title to a prime place in our imagination. Thyer and Warburton both remark that the author has here imitated Shakspeare's manner more than in the rest of his compositions.

The spirits of the air were favourite idols of Milton: he had from early youth become intimately acquainted with all that learning, all that superstition, and all that popular belief had related regarding them; and he had added all that his own rich and creative imagination could combine with it.

It seems that an accidental event, which occurred to the family of his patron, John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, then keeping his court at Ludlow Castle, as Lord President of Wales, gave birth to this fable. The earl's two sons and daughter, Lady Alice, were benighted, and lost their way in Haywood-forest; and the two brothers, in the attempt to explore their path, left the sister alone, in a track of country rudely inhabited by sets of boors and savage peasants. On these simple facts the poet raised a superstructure of such fairy spells and poetical delight, as has never since been equalled.

Masks, as I have already remarked, were then in fashion with the court and great nobility; and when the Lord President entered upon the state of his new office, this entertainment was properly deemed a splendid mode of recommending himself to the country in the opening of his high function. Milton was the poet on whom Lord Bridgewater would naturally call; the bard having already produced the 'Arcades' for the countess's mother, Lady Derby, at Harefield, in Middlesex.

Comus discovers the beautiful Lady in her forlorn and unprotected state; and, to secure her as a prize for his unprincipled voluptuousness, addresses her in the disguised character of a peasant, offering to conduct her to his own lowly but loyal cottage, until he hears of her stray attendants: meanwhile, the brothers, unable to find their way back to their sister, become dreadfully uneasy lest some harm should befall her: nevertheless, they comfort themselves with the protection which Heaven affords to innocence; but the good Spirit, with whom the poem opens, now enters, and informs them of the character of Comus, and his wicked designs upon their sister. Under his guidance, they rush in on Comus and his crew, who had already carried off the Lady; put them to the rout: and release the captive, imprisoned by their spells, by the counter-spells of Sabrina. She is then carried back to her father's court, received in joy and triumph; and here the Mask ends.

Who but Milton, unless perhaps Shakspeare, could have made this the subject of a thousand lines,—in which not only every verse, but literally every word, is pure and exquisite poetry? Never was there such a copiousness of picturesque rural images brought together; every epithet is racy, glowing, beautiful, and appropriate. But this is not all: the sentiments are tender, or lofty, refined, philosophical, virtuous, and wise. The chaste and graceful eloquence of the Lady is enchanting;—the language flowing, harmonious, elegant, and almost ethereal. As Cowper said of his feelings when he first perused Milton, we, in reading these dialogues, "dance for joy."

But almost even more than this part, the contrasted descriptions given by the good Spirit and Comus, of their respective offices and occupations, by carrying us into a visionary world, have a surprising sort of poetical magic.

This was the undoubted forerunner of that sort of spiritual invention, which more than thirty years afterwards produced 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained:' but with this characteristic and essential difference: that 'Comus' was written in youth, in joy and hope, and buoyancy, and playfulness; and those majestic and sublime epics, in the shadowed experience of age, in sorrow and disappointment,—

With darkness and with dangers compass'd round.

The latter therefore are bolder, deeper, grander, more heavenward, and more instructive: the smile-loving taste of blooming youth may, and will, for these reasons, relish 'Comus' most.

'Comus' is almost all description: a large portion of the epics is argumentative grandeur: the sentiments of the Mask have a Platonic fancifulness; those of the epics have an awful, religious, and scriptural solemnity; the rebellion of angels, the fall of man, and the wily temptations of Satan in the wilderness, fill us with grave and sorrowful imaginations; but 'Comus' is all pleasure; and the cool shadows of the leafy woods, the dewy morning, and the fragrant evening, and all the laughing scenery of rural nature,—the murmurs of the streams, and the enchanting songs of Echo,—the abodes of fairies, and sylvan deities,—convey nothing but cheerfulness and joy to the eyes or the heart. In the epics we enter into the realms of trial and suffering; there all is mightiness,—but mainly overshadowed by the darkness of crime, and regrets at the forfeiture of a state of heavenly and inexpressible enjoyment. When life grows sober from experience, and misfortunes, and wrongs, we take pleasure in these representations, because they are more congenial to the gloom of our own bosoms: we require stronger and deeper excitements; and we become more intellectual, and less fascinated by external beauty: we are no longer contented with mere description, but seek what will satisfy the reason, the soul, and the conscience: we examine the depths of learning, and the authorities which cannot deceive. But 'Comus' glitters like a bright landscape under the glowing beams of the morning-sun, when they first disperse the vapours of night: the scenery is such as youthful bards dream in their slumbers on the banks of some haunted river: everything of pastoral imagery is brought together with a profusion, a freshness, a distinctness, a picturesque radiance, which enchants like magic: every epithet is chosen with the most inimitable felicity, and is a picture in itself. Perhaps every word may be found in Shakspeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Spenser, Jonson, Drayton, or other predecessors: but the array of all these words is nowhere else to be found in such close and happy combination. In all other poets these descriptions are patches;—there is no continued web. Thomson is beautiful in rural description, but he has not the distinctness and fairyism of Milton. Add to this the magic inventiveness of the spiritual beings, by which all this landscape is inhabited and animated. The mind is thus kept in a sort of delicious dream.

This Mask has every quality of genuine poetry. Here is a beautiful fable of pure invention: here is character, sentiment, and rich and harmonious language. The author carries us out of the world of mere matter, and places us in an Elysium. Shakspeare shows an equal imagination in the "Tempest;" but he has always coarseness intermixed. I am not sure that he ever continues two pages together of pure poetry: he sullies it by descending to colloquialities.

Milton is never guilty of the wanton and eccentric sports of imagination: he deals in what is consistent with our belief, and the rules of just taste. he never is guilty of extravagance or whim. Minor poets resort to this for the purpose of raising a false surprise. It is easy to invent where no regard is had to truth or probability.

The songs of this poem are of a singular felicity: they are unbroken streams of exquisite imagery, either imaginative or descriptive, with a dance of numbers, which sounds like aerial music: for instance, the Lady's song to Echo:—

> Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that livest unseen
> Within thy aery shell,
> By slow Meander's margent green,
> And in the violet-embroider'd vale,
> Where the love-lorn nightingale
> Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well!

The more we study this poem, the more pleasure we shall find in it: it illuminates and refines our fancy; and enables us to discover in rural scenery new delights, and distinguish the features of each object with a clearness which our own sight would not have given us: it presents to us those associations which improve our intellect, and spiritualize the material joys of our senses. The effect of poetical language is to convey a sort of internal lustre, which puts the mind in a blaze: it is like bringing a bright lamp to a dark chamber.

But let it not be understood that I put this Mask upon a par with the epics, or the tragedy: these are of a still sublimer tone: their ingredients are still more ex-

tensive and more gigantic. The garden of Eden is vastly richer than woods and forests inhabited by dryads, wood-nymphs, and shepherds, and other sylvan crews, spiritual or embodied. Contemplate the intensity of power, which could delineate the creation of the world, the flight of Satan through Chaos, or our Saviour resisting Satan in the wilderness! To arrive at the highest rank of this divine art, requires a union of all its highest essences: there must be a creation, not only of beauty, but of majesty and profound sensibility, and great intellect and moral wisdom, and grace and grandeur of style, all blended. This the epics, and even the tragedy, have reached: but the Mask does not contain, nor did it require to admit this stupendous combination. It was intended as a sport of mental amusement and refined cheerfulness: no tragedy, nor tale coloured with the darker hues of man's contemplations, was designed. In the gay visions of youthful hope the stronger colours and forms of sublimity and pathos do not come forth: the court at Ludlow was met, not to weep, nor be awfully moved;—but to smile: they cried, with 'L'Allegro,'—

Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful jollity—
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek:—
Sport, that wrinkled Care derides;
And Laughter, holding both her sides!

The poet had to accommodate himself to an audience of this character; yet so as not to shrink from the display of some of his own high gifts: and, O, with what inimitable brilliance and force he has performed his task! It is true that there is a mixture of grave philosophy in this poem:—but how calm it is!—how dressed with flowers!—how covered with graceful and brilliant imagery! Other feelings of a more sombre kind are awakened by the descriptions of the scenery of nature in the greater poems, except during the period before the serpent's entry into Eden.

There are hours and seasons, when, in the midst of the blackness of our woes, we can dally a little while with our melancholy, our regrets, and our anxieties;—when we are willing to delude ourselves by an escape into Elysian gardens;—to look upon nothing but the joys of the creation; and to see the scenery of forests, mountains, valleys, meadows, and rivers, in all their unshadowed delightfulness; where echo repeats no sounds but those of joyful music; and gay and untainted beauty walks the woods; and cheerfulness haunts the mountains and the glades; and labour lives in the fresh air in competence and content: delusions, indeed, not a little excessive, but innocent and soothing delusions. Fallen man cannot so enjoy this breathing globe of inexhaustible riches and splendour: but poets may so present it to him: and the charms they thus supply to our fearful and dangerous existence, are medicines and gifts which deserve our deep gratitude; and will not let the memory of the givers be forgotten by posterity. What gift of this kind has our nation had so full of charms and excellence as 'Comus?'—And here I close, when I recollect how many panegyrists of greater weight than my voice, this perfect composition has already had.

THE PERSONS.

The Attendant Spirit, *afterwards in the habit of* THYRSIS.
COMUS, *with his* Crew.
The Lady.
First Brother.
Second Brother.
SABRINA, *the Nymph.*

The chief Persons, who presented, were

The LORD BRACKLEY. | MR. THOMAS EGERTON, *his Brother.*
The LADY ALICE EGERTON.

The first Scene discovers a wild Wood.

The Attendant Spirit *descends or enters.*

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered[a]
In regions mild[b] of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call earth; and, with low-thoughted care
Confined, and pester'd in this pinfold[c] here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants,
Amongst the enthroned gods[d] on sainted seats.
Yet some there be, that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key,
That opes the palace of Eternity[e]:
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil[f] these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway

[a] *Of bright aerial spirits live insphered.*

In 'Il Penseroso,' the spirit of Plato was to be unsphered, v. 88, that is, to be called down from the sphere to which it had been allotted, where it had been insphered: thus also light is "sphered in a radiant cloud," 'Paradise Lost,' b. vii. 247.—T. Warton.

[b] *In regions mild, &c.*

Alluding probably to Homer's happy seat of the gods, Odyss. vi. 42.—Newton.

[c] *Pinfold.*

"Pinfold" is now provincial, and signifies sometimes a sheepfold, but most commonly a pound.—T. Warton.

[d] *Amongst the enthroned gods.*

We may read with Fenton, "the enthroned;" or rather—

Amongst the gods enthroned on sainted seats.

But Shakspeare seems to ascertain the old collocation, "Antony and Cleopatra," a. i. s. 3:—

Though you in swearing shake the throned gods.

Milton, however, when speaking of the inhabitants of heaven, exclusively of any allusion to the class of angels styled *thrones*, seems to have annexed an idea of a dignity peculiar, and his own, to the word "enthroned." See 'Paradise Lost,' b. v. 536.—T. Warton.

[e] *That opes the palace of Eternity.*

So Pope, with a little alteration, in one of his satires, speaking of virtue:—

Her priestess Muse forbids the good to die,
And opes the temple of Eternity.—Newton.

[f] *I would not soil, &c.*

But, in the 'Paradise Lost,' an angel eats with Adam, b. v. 433: this, however, was before the fall of our first parent: and as the angel Gabriel condescends to feast with Adam while yet unpolluted, and in his primeval state of innocence; so our guardian spirit would not have soiled the purity of his ambrosial robes with the noisome exhalations of this sin-corrupted earth, but to assist those distinguished mortals, who, by a due progress in virtue, aspire to reach the golden key, which opens the palace of Eternity.—T. Warton.

Of every salt flood[g] and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove[h]
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles,
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadorned bosom of the deep[i];
Which he, to grace his tributary gods[j],
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,
And wield their little tridents: but this isle,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters[k] to his blue-hair'd deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms[l]:
Where his fair offspring[m], nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-entrusted sceptre: but their way
Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horrour of whose shady brows[n]
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,

[g] *Of every salt flood.*

As in Lord Surrey's "Songs and Sonnets," &c., edit. 1587:—

And in grene waues when the salt floode
Doth ryse by rage of wynde.—TODD.

[h] *'Twixt high and nether Jove.*

So, in Sylvester's "Du Bart." 1621, p. 1003:—

Both upper Jove's and nether's diverse thrones.—DUNSTER.

[i] *That, like to rich and various gems, inlay*
The unadorned bosom of the deep.

The thought, as has been observed, is first in Shakspeare, of England, "Richard II." a. ii. s. 1:—"This precious stone set in the silver sea." But Milton has heightened the comparison, omitting Shakspeare's petty conceit of the silver sea, the conception of a jeweller, and substituting another and a more striking piece of imagery.—T. WARTON.

[j] *Tributary gods.*

Hence perhaps Pope, in a similar vein of allegory, took his "tributary urns," "Windsor Forest," v. 436.—T. WARTON.

[k] *He quarters.*

That is, Neptune; with which name he honours the king, as sovereign of the four seas; for from the British Neptune only this noble peer derives his authority.—WARBURTON.

[l] *With temper'd awe to guide*
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms.

That is, the Cambro-Britons, who were to be governed by respect mixed with awe.—T. WARTON.

[m] *Where his fair offspring, &c.*

In 'Arcades,' v. 27, an allusion is made to the honourable birth of the maskers. Probably an allusion might have been here intended, as well to the personal beauty, as to the princely descent of the young actors from Henry VII.—TODD.

[n] *The nodding horrour of whose shady brows, &c.*

Compare Tasso's enchanted forest, "Gier. Lib." c. xiii. st. 2; and Petrarch's Sonnet, composed as he passed through the forest of Ardennes, in his way to Avignon.—TODD.

But that by quick command from sovran Jove
I was despatch'd for their defence and guard:
And listen why [o]; for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song [p],
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower [q].
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape [r]
Crush'd the sweet poison of misused wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd [s],
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed [t],
On Circe's island fell (who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun [u], whose charmed cup
Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine [v]?):
This nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks [w]
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named [x]:

[o] *And listen why, &c.*

Horace, Od. III. i. 2:—

Favete linguis: carmina non prius
Audita—
Virginibus puerisque canto.—RICHARDSON.

[p] *What never yet was heard in tale or song.*

The poet insinuates that the story or fable of his Mask was new and unborrowed, although distantly founded on ancient poetical history. The allusion is to the ancient mode of entertaining a splendid assembly, by singing or reciting tales.—T. WARTON.

[q] *In hall or bower.*

That is, literally, in hall or chamber. The two words are often thus joined in the old metrical romances.—T. WARTON.

[r] *Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape, &c.*

Though Milton builds his fable on classic mythology, yet his materials of magic have more the air of enchantments in the Gothic romances.—WARBURTON.

[s] *After the Tuscan mariners transform'd.*

This story is alluded to in Homer's fine "Hymn to Bacchus;" the punishments he inflicted on the Tyrrhene pirates, by transforming them into various animals, are the subjects of that beautiful frieze on the lantern of Demosthenes, so accurately and elegantly described by Mr. Stuart, in his "Antiquities of Athens," vol. i. p. 33.—JOS. WARTON.

[t] *Winds listed.*

So, in St. John iii. 8:—"The wind bloweth where it listeth."—T. WARTON.

[u] *The daughter of the Sun, &c.*

Mr. Bowle observes that Milton here undoubtedly alluded to Boethius, l. iv. But see Virgil, Æn. vii. 11, 17. Alcina has an enchanted cup in Ariosto, c. x. 45.—T. WARTON.

[v] *And downward fell into a grovelling swine.*

Here Milton might have been influenced by G. Fletcher's description of the bower of vain delight, to which our Lord is conducted by Satan. See "Christ's Victorie," st 49.—HEADLEY.

[w] *This nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks.*

This image of hair hanging in clusters, or curls, like a bunch of grapes, Milton afterwards adopted into the 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 308. Compare also 'Sams. Agon.' v. 569.—T. WARTON.

[x] *And Comus named.*

Dr. Newton observes, that Comus is a deity of Milton's own making: but it should be remembered, that Comus is distinctly and most sublimely personified in the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus, v. 1195, where, says Cassandra, enumerating in her vaticinal

Who, ripe and frolick of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtick and Iberian fields[y],
At last betakes him to this ominous wood[z];
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbower'd,
Excels his mother at her mighty art,
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst[a]),
Soon as the potion works, their human countenance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form[b] of wolf, or bear;
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were;
And they, so perfect is their misery,

ravings the horrors that haunted her house:—"That horrid band, who sing of evil things, will never forsake this house. Behold, Comus, the drinker of human blood, and fired with new rage, still remains within the house, being sent forward in an unlucky hour by the Furies his kindred, who chant a hymn recording the original crime of this fated family," &c.

Peck supposes Milton's Comus to be Chemos, "the obscene dread of Moab's sons," 'Par. Lost,' b. i 406: but, with a sufficient propriety of allegory, he is professedly made the son of Bacchus and of Homer's sorceress Circe. Besides, our author, in his early poetry, and he was only twenty-six years old, is generally more classical and less scriptural than in pieces written after he had been deeply tinctured with the Bible. It must not, in the mean time, here be omitted, that Comus, the god of cheer, had been before a dramatic personage in one of Jonson's Masks before the court, 1619. An immense cup is carried before him, and he is crowned with roses and other flowers, &c., vol. vi. 29. His attendants carry javelins wreathed with ivy: he enters, riding in triumph from a grove of ivy, to the wild music of flutes, tabors, and cymbals. At length, the grove of ivy is destroyed, p. 35,

And the voluptuous Comus, god of cheer,
Beat from his grove, and that defaced. &c.

See also Jonson's "Forest," b. i. 3:—

Comus puts in for new delights, &c.—T. Warton.

Mr. Hole, in his "Remarks on the Arabian Nights' Entertainments," observes that Mr. Warton's quotation from the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus does not agree with the character of Milton's Comus; and that the Comus of Ben Jonson is not the prototype of Milton's, as in Jonson's mask he is represented, not as a gay seducing voluptuary, but merely as the god of good cheer, *Epicuri porcus*. Yet Jonson's mask perhaps afforded some hints to Milton. Comus had also appeared in English literature, as a mere belly-god, before Jonson's introduction of him. See Decker's "Gvls Horne-booke," bl. l. 1609. p. 4.—Todd.

[y] *The Celtick and Iberian fields.*

France and Spain.—Thyer.

[z] *Ominous wood.*

"Ominous" is dangerous, inauspicious, full of portents, prodigies, wonders, monstrous appearances, misfortunes; synonymous words for omens. See 'Par. Reg.' b. iv. 481:—"This ominous night," &c.—T. Warton.

[a] *For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst.*

Thus Ulysses, taking the charmed cup from Circe, Ovid, Met. xiv. 276:—

Accipimus sacra data pocula dextra,
Quæ simul arenti sitientes hausimus ore.—T. Warton.

[b] *Into some brutish form, &c.*

So Harrington, of Alcina's enchantments, "Orl. Fur." b. vi. st. 52.—Todd.

Not once perceive their foul disfigurement[c],
But boast themselves[d] more comely than before;
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual stye[e].
Therefore, when any, favour'd of high Jove,
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade[f],
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star[g]
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do: but first I must put off
These my sky-robes spun out of Iris' woof[h],

[c] *And they, so perfect is their misery,*
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement.

Compare Spenser, "Faer. Qu." II. i. 54, of Sir Mordaunt, where his lady relates to Sir Guyon his wretched captivity in the bower of Bliss, under the enchantress Acrasia, whose "charmed cup," st. 55, finally destroys him: and by whom, says the lady, he had before been

In chains of lust and lewde desires ybound,
And so transformed from his former skill,
That me he knew not, neither his owne ill.—TODD.

[d] *But boast themselves, &c.*

He certainly alludes to that fine satire, in a dialogue of Plutarch, where some of Ulysses's companions, disgusted with the vices and vanities of human life, refuse to be restored by Circe into the shape of men.—JOS. WARTON.

Or, perhaps, to J. Baptista Gelli's Italian Dialogues, called "Circe," formed on Plutarch's plan.—T. WARTON.

Dr. Newton observes, that there is a remarkable difference in the transformations wrought by Circe, and those by her son Comus: in Homer, the persons are entirely changed, their mind alone remaining as it was before, Odyss. x. 239: but here, only their head or countenance is changed, and for a very good reason; because they were to appear upon the stage, which they might do in masks: in Homer, too, they are sorry for the exchange, v. 241; but here, the allegory is finely improved, and they have no notion of their disfigurement. This improvement upon Homer might still be copied from Homer, who ascribes much the same effect to the herb Lotos, Odyss. ix. 94, which whoever tasted, "forgot his friends and native home." After all, Milton perhaps remembered Plato, where he alludes to the intoxicating power of the herb, and to the wretched situation of the Lotophagi, in that striking description of profligate youths, who, immersed in pleasure, not only refuse to hear the advice of friends, "but boast themselves more comely than before." De Repub. lib. viii.—TODD.

[e] *To roll with pleasure in a sensual stye.*

Milton applies the same fable, in the same language, to Tiberius, 'Par. Reg.' b. iv. 100:—

——Expel this monster from his throne,
Now made a stye.—T. WARTON.

[f] *Therefore, when any, favour'd of high Jove,*
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade.

The Spirit in 'Comus' is the Satyr in Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess." He is sent by Pan to guide shepherds passing through a forest by moonlight, and to protect innocence in distress, a. iii. s. 1.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star.*

There are few finer comparisons that lie in so small a compass. Milton has repeated the thought in 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 555:—

Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired
Impress the air, &c.

Compare 'Par. Reg.' b. iv. 619.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Spun out of Iris' woof.*

So our author of the archangel's military robe, 'Par. Lost,' b. xi. 244:—"Iris had

And take the weeds and likeness of a swain[i]
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods[j]; nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now[k].

[Comus enters with a charming rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening: they come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.]

Com. The star, that bids the shepherd fold[l],
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantick stream;
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal

dipp'd the woof." Milton has frequent allusions to the colours of the rainbow. Truth and Justice are not only orbed in a rainbow, but are appareled in its colours, 'Ode on Nativ.' st. xv.—T. Warton.

[i] *And take the weeds and likeness of a swain, &c.*

Henry Lawes, the musician, who acted the part of the Spirit.—Todd.

[j] *Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,*
And hush the waving woods.

Lawes himself, no bad poet, in "A Pastorall Elegie to the Memorie of his Brother William," applies the same compliment to his brother's musical skill:—

Weep, shepherd swaines!
For him that was the glorie of your plaines.
He could allay the murmurs of the wind;
He could appease
The sullen seas,
And calme the fury of the mind.

[k] *I must be viewless now.*

The epithet "viewless" occurs in the 'Ode on the Passion,' st. viii., and in 'Par. Lost,' b. iii. 518. Shakspeare has "the viewless winds." Mr. Bowle observes, that the Spirit's conduct here much resembles that of Oberon in the "Midsum. Night's Dream:"—

But who comes here? I am invisible,
And I will overhear their conference.—T. Warton.

[l] *The star that bids the shepherd fold.*

Collins, in his beautiful "Ode to Evening," introduces this pastoral notation of time, accompanied with the most romantic and delightful imagery:—

—— When thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, as his warning lamp,
The fragrant Hours and Elves,
Who slept in buds the day;
And many a nymph, who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.—Todd.

Of his chamber in the East[m].
Meanwhile welcome joy, and feast,
Midnight shout, and revelry,
Tipsy dance, and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed[n],
And Advice with scrupulous head[o]:
Strict age and sour severity[p],
With their grave saws[q], in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres[r],
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move[s];
And, on the tawny sands and shelves,
Trip the pert faeries and the dapper elves[t].

[m] *Pacing toward the other goal*
Of his chamber in the East.

In allusion to the same metaphors employed by the psalmist, Ps. xix. 5:—"The sun as a bridegroom cometh out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race."—NEWTON.

[n] *Rigour now is gone to bed.*

Much in the strain of Sidney, "England's Helicon," p. 1, edit. 1600:—

Night hath closed all in her cloake;
Twinkling stars loue-thoughts prouoke;
Daunger hence good care doth keepe;
Iealousie itself doth sleepe.—T. WARTON.

[o] *And Advice with scrupulous head.*

The manuscript reading, "And quick Law," is the best. It is not the essential attribute of advice to be scrupulous; but it is of quick law, or watchful law, to be so.—WARBURTON.

It was, however, in character for Comus to call "advice scrupulous." It was his business to depreciate, or ridicule, advice, at the expense of truth and propriety.—T. WARTON.

[p] *Severity.*

There is an earlier use of this word in the same signification. See Daniel's "Compl. Rosam." st. 39, edit. 1601, fol.:—

Titles that cold seueritie hath found.—T. WARTON.

[q] *Saws.*

"Saws," sayings, maxims. Shakspeare, "As you Like it," a. ii. s. 7:—

Full of wise saws.—NEWTON.

[r] *Watchful spheres.*

So in the 'Ode Nativ.' v. 21:—"And all the spangled host keep watch in order bright." See also 'Vac. Exercise,' v. 40:—"The spheres of watchful fire." Compare Baruch iii. 34:—"The stars shined in their watches." And Ecclus. xliii. 10.—TODD.

[s] *In wavering morrice move.*

The morrice, or Moorish dance, was first brought into England, as I take it, in Edward III.'s time, when John of Gaunt returned from Spain, where he had been to assist his father-in-law, Peter, king of Castile, against Henry the Bastard.—PECK.

[t] *And, on the tawny sands and shelves,*
Trip the pert faeries and the dapper elves.

Fairies and elves are common to our national poetry; they also figure in tradition; and among the pastoral inhabitants of the lonesome hills and dales the belief in them is still

By dimpled brook [u] and fountain-brim [v],
The wood-nymphs, deck'd with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rites begin;
'Tis only day-light that makes sin [w],
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.—
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veil'd Cotytto [x]! to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame,
That ne'er art call'd but when the dragon woom [y]
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,

strong. How they were imported, and from what land, has been and perhaps will continue a matter of conjecture: no one has had the boldness to believe that they are of British growth, though there are people still living who imagine they have seen them, and heard the sound of their elfin minstrelsy. The fairies, according to popular testimony, are an elegant and accomplished race: they dwell in palaces under secluded hills; they frequent, when the summer moon is up, the lonely stream banks; they spread tables sometimes in desert places, and astonish and refresh the benighted and hungry traveller with spiced cakes and perfumed wine; nor do they hesitate to mount their steeds—an elfin race; and, accompanied by music from invisible instruments, ride through the lonely villages at midnight, less to the alarm than the delight of the inhabitants. The last time they were seen in the south of Scotland was some five-and-forty years ago:—"When I was a boy of fifteen," said my informant, "I saw on a summer eve, just after sunset, what seemed a long line of little children running down the summit of a decayed turf fence, which bound as with a vertical belt a hill about half a mile distant: they were very little; they seemed clothed, but bare-headed; and, what was odd, they seemed to sink into the hill when they reached a gap in the ridge down which they were running. There were hundreds of them, but one was twice as tall as the rest: we saw him thrice disappear on our side of the hill and thrice appear at the top again, as if he had passed through below the solid hill. I said we, because though I saw the 'pert fairies and the dapper elves' first, all the inhabitants of the village, some fifteen or so, saw them also." This is the latest account on record of the fairy-folk.—C.

[u] *By dimpled brook.*

Shenstone has adopted this picturesque expression, "Ode on Rural Elegance:"—

Forego a court's alluring pale
For dimpled brook and leafy grove.—TODD.

[v] *Fountain-brim.*

This was the pastoral language of Milton's age. So Drayton, "Bar. W." vi. 36:—

Sporting with Hebe by a fountaine brim.—TODD.

[w] *'Tis only day-light that makes sin.*

Mr. Bowle supposes that Milton had his eye on these gallant lyrics of a song in Jonson's "Fox," a. iii. s. 7:—

'Tis no sinne love's fruit to steale,
But the sweet thefts to reveale:
To be taken, to be scene,
These have crimes accounted beene.—T. WARTON.

[x] *Dark-veil'd Cotytto.*

The goddess of wantonness.—TODD.

[y] *The dragon woom.*

Popular belief in some districts bestows on British witches the power of turning light into darkness, given by Milton and others to "dark-veil'd Cotytto." In one of the vales of the north dwelt in other days three witches: the first could milk the cows at the same moment for ten miles around her; the second could turn her slipper into a

And makes one blot of all the air;
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecate, and befriend
Us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out;
Ere the blabbing eastern scout[z],
The nice[a] morn, on the Indian steep
From her cabin'd loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale sun descry
Our conceal'd solemnity.—
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground,
In a light fantastick round[b].

THE MEASURE.

Break off, break off[c], I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds[d], within these brakes and trees;

sea-worthy ship, and make a voyage to Lapland; while the third had an enchanted distaff, which not only when she twirled it round, against the course of nature,—

Made one blot of all the air;

but whatever she wished for when the cloud descended, she found at her command when it passed away and light returned. A dame so gifted could not fail to live in ease and comfort; and yet, if tradition is not in error, her life was aught but easy and gladsome: her house was mean; her dress was sordid; her meals were scanty; and whenever she moved abroad, she was pursued by the hue and cry of an evil reputation. Of her tricks and her transformations,—how she could turn a fox into a brown colt, and ride it over hill and dale,—how she could become a hare, and set patent shot and the swiftest hounds at defiance, together with many matters more marvellous still,—are they not recorded in that large and unfinished volume of traditionary belief which belongs to the northern peasantry?—C.

[z] *Ere the blabbing eastern scout.*

Shakspeare, "K. Hen. VI." P. II. a. iv. s. 1:—

The gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful day.—TODD.

[a] *Nice.*

A finely-chosen epithet, expressing at once curious and squeamish.—HURD.

[b] *Come, knit hands, and beat the ground,*
In a light fantastick round.

Compare Fletcher's "Faith. Shep." a. i. s. 1:—

Arm in arm
Tread we softly in a round:
While the hollow neighbouring ground, &c.—T. WARTON.

[c] *Break off.*

A dance is here begun, called the measure; which the magician almost as soon breaks off, on perceiving the approach of "some chaste footing," from a sagacity appropriated to his character.—T. WARTON.

A measure is said to have been a court dance of a stately turn; but sometimes to have expressed dances in general. A round is thus defined in Barret's "Alvearie," 1580:—"When men daunce and sing, taking hands round." But the most curious and lively description of the measure and the round, is given in a series of fifteen lines, in Browne's "Britannia's Pastorals," b. i. s. 3.—TODD.

[d] *Shrouds.*

To your recesses, harbours, hiding-places, &c. So in the 'Hymn Nativ.' v. 218:—"Naught but profoundest hell can be his shroud." And see 'Par. Lost,' b. x. 1068.

Our number may affright: some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains: I shall ere long
Be well stock'd with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells[e] into the spungy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion[f],
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed[g] astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
Which must not be, for that's against my course:
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glozing[h] courtesy
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magick dust[i],
I shall appear some harmless villager[j],
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes: I fairly[k] step aside,
And hearken, if I may, her business here.

We have the verb, 'Par. Reg.' b. iv. 419, and below in 'Comus,' v. 316, where the last line is written in the manuscript, "Within these shroudie limits." Whence we are led to suspect, that our author, in some of these instances, has an equivocal reference to shrouds in the sense of the branches of a tree, now often used.—T. WARTON.

[e] *My dazzling spells.*

See Fletcher, "Faith. Shep." a. iii. s. 1.

Adam says, that in his conversation with the angel, his earthly nature was overpowered by the heavenly, and, as with an object that excels the sense, "dazzled and spent."—'Par. Lost,' b. viii. 457.—T. WARTON.

[f] *To cheat the eye with blear illusion.*

In our author's 'Reformation,' &c.:—"If our understanding have a film of ignorance over it, or be blear with gazing on other false glisterings," &c. 'Pr. W.' i. 12. But "blear-eyed" is a common and well-known phrase.—T. WARTON.

[g] *And my quaint habits breed, &c.*

That is, my strange habits, as Mr. Warton has observed; in which sense, "quaint" is often used by Spenser. But Milton here illustrates himself in the Preface to his 'Hist. of Moscovia:'—"Long stories of absurd superstitions, ceremonies, quaint habits," &c.—TODD.

[h] *Glozing.*

Flattering, deceitful. As in 'Par. Lost,' b. iii. 93—"Glozing lies." Perhaps from Spenser, "Faer. Qu." III. viii. 14:—"Could well his glozing speeches frame."—T. WARTON.

[i] *When once her eye*
Hath met the virtue of this magick dust.

This refers to a previous line, "my powder'd spells," v. 154. But "powder'd" was afterwards altered into the present reading "dazzling." When a poet corrects, he is apt to forget and destroy his original train of thought.—T. WARTON.

[j] *Some harmless villager.*

So Satan appeared to our Saviour in the 'Paradise Regained.'

[k] *Fairly.*

That is, softly.—HURD.

The LADY *enters.*

Lad. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now: methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute, or gamesome pipe,
Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,
When for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loath
To meet the rudeness and swill'd insolence
Of such late wassailers [l]; yet, O! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet [m]
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood [n]?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines [o],
Stepp'd, as they said, to the next thicket-side,
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide [p].
They left me then, when the gray-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist [q] in palmer's weed [r],

[l] *To meet the rudeness and swill'd insolence*
Of such late wassailers.

In some parts of England, especially in the west, it is still customary for a company of mummers, in the evening of the Christmas holidays, to go about carousing from house to house, who are called the wassailers. In Macbeth, "Wine and wassel" mean, in general terms, feasting and drunkenness, a. i. s. 7.—T. WARTON.

[m] *Shall I inform my unacquainted feet.*

In the "Faithful Shepherdess," Amoret wanders through a wild wood in the night, but under different circumstances, yet not without some apprehensions of danger. We have a parallel expression in 'Sams. Agon.' v. 335:—

hither hath inform'd
Your younger feet.—T. WARTON.

[n] *Tangled wood.*

"They seek the dark, the bushy, the tangled forest," 'Prose W.' vol. i. p. 13. And see 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 176.—T. WARTON.

[o] *Under the spreading favour of these pines.*

This is like Virgil's "Hospitiis teneat frondentibus arbos," Georg. iv. 24. An inversion of the same sort occurs in Cicero, in a Latin version from Sophocles, "Trachiniæ," of the shirt of Nessus. "Tusc. Disp." ii. 8—"Ipse inligatus peste interimor textili."—T. WARTON.

[p] *To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit*
As the kind hospitable woods provide.

So Fletcher, "Faith. Shep." a. i. s. 1, where, says the virgin-shepherdess Clorin,—

My meat shall be what these wild woods afford,
Berries and chesnuts, &c.

By laying the scene of his Mask in a wild forest, Milton secured to himself a perpetual fund of picturesque description, which, resulting from situation, was always at hand. He was not obliged to go out of his way for this striking embellishment: it was suggested of necessity by present circumstances.—T. WARTON.

[q] *When the gray-hooded Even,*
Like a sad votarist, &c.

Milton, notwithstanding his abhorrence of everything that related to superstition, often dresses his imaginary beings in the habits of popery; but poetry is of all religions;

Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts; 'tis likeliest
They had engaged their wandering steps[s] too far;
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me: else, O thievish night[t],
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,
That nature hung in heaven, and fill'd their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet naught but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory[u],

and popery is a very poetical one. A votarist is one who had made a religious vow, here perhaps for a pilgrimage, being in "palmer's weeds."—T. WARTON.

[r] *Palmer's weed.*

Spenser, "Faer. Qu." II. i. 52:—"I wrapt myself in palmer's weed."—NEWTON.

[s] *Their wandering steps.*

So, in those beautiful and impressive lines, which close the 'Paradise Lost:'—

They hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.—TODD.

[t] *O thievish Night.*

Ph. Fletcher's "Pisc. Ecl." p. 34, edit. 1633:—

The thievish night
Steals on the world, and robs our eyes of light.

In the present age, in which almost every common writer avoids palpable absurdities, at least monstrous and unnatural conceits, would Milton have introduced this passage, where thievish Night is supposed, for some felonious purpose, to shut up the stars in her dark lantern? Certainly not. But in the present age, correct and rational as it is, had 'Comus' been written, we should not perhaps have had some of the greatest beauties of its wild and romantic imagery.—T. WARTON.

[u] *A thousand fantasies*
Begin to throng into my memory, &c.

Milton had here perhaps a remembrance of Shakspeare, "King John," a. v. s. 7:—

With many legions of strange fantasies,
Which, in their throng and press to that last hold,
Confound themselves.—T. WARTON.

Much of our own island superstition is crowded into these lines: it is true that in a city guarded by a regular police and lighted by patent gas, and infested by sharpers and pickpockets, man, even though inclined to superstitious dread, cannot feel fearful of "calling shapes," and "beckoning shadows," and "airy tongues:" but let him have a haunted road—such as that along which Tam o'Shanter rode—to travel on at midnight: let his local knowledge supply him with the recollection of all the misdeeds and murders perpetrated for three miles round: let there be a gloomy wood on one side of the way, and an old desolate burial-ground on the other: let him hear a sound advancing behind him, and let him see before him a doddered tree, between him and the blue sky, on which some man within his own memory hanged himself; and if he feels not something like dread upon him, he is either a very bold man or a very unimaginative one. The writer of this has heard an old gentleman, who had served with distinction in the British army, assert, oftener than once, that on riding one night past an old churchyard in a lonely

Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire[v],
And aery tongues that syllable[w] men's names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong-siding champion, Conscience.—
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith; white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings[x];
And thou, unblemish'd form of Chastity[y]!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassail'd.
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud[z]
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err; there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove:

part of the country, a white phantom started up from among the grave-stones, and stretched a long pale skinny hand towards the bridle of his horse. A pious ejaculation, and the application of the spur, freed him from all danger; but it was evident that he thought the sight he saw was of the other world, and not supplied by his imagination, excited into a creative fit by the solemn hour and haunted place.—C.

[v] *Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire, &c.*

I remember these superstitions, which are here finely applied, in the ancient Voyages of Marco Paolo the Venetian. he is speaking of the vast and perilous desert of Lop in Asia:—"Cernuntur et audiuntur in eo, interdiu, et sæpius noctu, dæmonum variæ illusiones: unde viatoribus summe cavendum est, ne multum ab invicem seipsos dissocient, aut aliquis a tergo sese diutius impediat: alioquin, quamprimum propter montes et calles quispiam comitum suorum aspectum perdiderit, non facile ad eos perveniet: nam audiuntur ibi voces dæmonum, qui solitarie incedentes propriis appellant nominibus, voces fingentes illorum quos comitari se putant, ut a recto itinere abductos in perniciem deducant."—De Regionib. Oriental. l. i. c. 44.—T. Warton.

[w] *Syllable.*

Pronounce distinctly. As in Ph. Fletcher's "Poet. Misc." p. 85:—"Yet syllabled in flesh-spell'd characters."—T. Warton.

[x] *Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings.*

Thus, in Shakspeare's "Lover's Complaint," "Which like a cherubim, above them hover'd." But "hovering" is here applied with peculiar propriety to the angel Hope, in sight, on the wing; and if not approaching, yet not flying away; still appearing. Contemplation soars on golden wings, 'Il. Pens.' v. 52: and we have that "golden-winged host;" in the 'Ode on the Death of an Infant,' st. ix.—T. Warton.

[y] *And thou, unblemish'd form of Chastity! &c.*

In the same strain, Fletcher's Shepherdess in the soliloquy just cited:—

Then, strongest Chastity,
Be thou my strongest guard: for here I'll dwell
In opposition against fate and hell.—T. Warton.

[z] *Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud, &c.*

These lines are turned like that verse of Ovid, Fast. lib. v. 545:—"Fallor? an arma sonant? non fallimur: arma sonabant."—Hurd.

See also note on Eleg. v. 5. The repetition, arising from the conviction and confidence of an unaccusing conscience, is inimitably beautiful. When all succour seems to be lost, Heaven unexpectedly presents the silver lining of a sable cloud to the virtuous.—T. Warton.

I cannot halloo to my brothers[a], but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest,
I'll venture; for my new-enliven'd spirits
Prompt me: and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG.

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that livest unseen[b]
Within thy aery shell,
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroider'd[c] vale,
Where the love-lorn[d] nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well[e];
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair[f]
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave[g],
Tell me but where[h]
Sweet queen of parly, daughter of the sphere[i]!

[a] *I cannot halloo to my brothers, &c.*

So the jailer's daughter in Beaumont and Fletcher, benighted also and alone in a wood, whose character affords one of the finest female mad scenes in our language, "Two Noble Kins." a. iii. s. 2. She is in search of Palamon:—

I cannot halloo, &c.
I have heard
Strange howls this livelong night, &c.—T. WARTON.

[b] *That livest unseen.*

So Sylvester, "Du Bartas," p. 1210:—

Babbling echo, voice of vallies,
Aierie elfe exempt from view.—TODD.

[c] *Violet-embroider'd.*

This is a beautiful compound epithet, and the combination of the two words that compose it, natural and easy.—JOS. WARTON.

[d] *Love-lorn.*

Deprived of her mate; as "lass-lorn" in the "Tempest," a. iv. s. 2.—T. WARTON.

[e] *Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well.*

Compare Virgil, Georg. iv. 513:—

illa
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
Integrat, &c.—TODD.

[f] *A gentle pair.*

So Fletcher, "Faith. Shep." a. i. s. 1:—

A gentle pair
Have promised equal love.—T. WARTON.

[g] *O, if thou have*
Hid them in some flowery cave.

Here is a seeming inaccuracy for the sake of the rhyme: but the sense being hypothetical and contingent, we will suppose an ellipsis of "shouldest" before "have." A verse in St. John affords an apposite illustration:—"If thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him," xx. 15.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Tell me but where.*

Mr. Steevens suggests that part of the address to the sun, which Southern has put into the mouth of Oroonoko, is evidently copied from this passage:—

Or, if thy sister goddess has preferr'd
Her beauty to the skies to be a star,
O, tell me where she shines.—T. WARTON.

[i] *Daughter of the sphere.*

Milton has given her a much nobler and more poetical original than any of the

So mayst thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies [j].

Enter Comus.

Com. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment [k]?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven-down
Of darkness, till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the sirens three [l],
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs;
Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
And lap it in Elysium [m]: Scylla wept,

ancient mythologists: he supposes her to owe her first existence to the reverberation of the music of the spheres; in consequence of which he had just before called the horizon her "aery shell:" and from the gods, like other celestial beings of the classical order, she came down to men.—Warburton.

j *And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies.*

That is, the grace of their being accompanied with an echo. The goddess Echo was of peculiar service in the machinery of a mask, and therefore often introduced.—T. Warton.

This Alexandrine, as well as almost all the Alexandrines, has a magnificent swell, and shows that Milton had a fine lyrical ear.

k *Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould*
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?

This was plainly personal. Here the poet availed himself of an opportunity of paying a just compliment to the voice and skill of a real songstress; just as the two boys are complimented for their beauty and elegance of figure: and afterwards, the strains that "might create a soul under the ribs of death," are brought home, and found to be the voice "of my most honour'd Lady," v. 564, where the real and assumed characters of the speaker are blended.—T. Warton.

l *I have oft heard*
My mother Circe with the sirens three, &c.

Originally from Ovid, "Metam." xiv. 264, of Circe:—

Nereides, Nymphæque simul, quæ vellera motis
Nulla trahunt digitis, nec fila sequentia ducunt,
Gramina disponunt; sparsosque sine ordine flores
Secernunt calathis, variasque coloribus herbas.
Ipsa, quod hæ faciunt, opus exigit; ipsa quid usus
Quoque sit in folio, quæ sit concordia mistis,
Novit; et advertens pensas examinat herbas.

Milton calls the Naiades (he should have said Nereides) "flowery-kirtled," because they were employed in collecting flowers.—T. Warton.

m *Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,*
And lap it in Elysium.

The mermaidens of modern tale and story inherit all the powers of the sirens of classic song: they are described as women to the waist, and fair, with bright eyes; and locks which they are continually braiding: nor has fancy hesitated to supply them with small round looking-glasses, in which seamen aver they are fond of surveying their charms. The parts below the waves may be given up to the imagination; they are supposed to be otherwise than lovely; but the part above, the glowing words of poesy have been called in to describe; nor has any poet surpassed in description the loveliness with which po-

And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause [n]:
Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself [o];
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now.—I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen.—Hail, foreign wonder [p]!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan, or Sylvan; by bless'd song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood [q].
Lad. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise,
That is address'd to unattending ears;

pular belief has endowed them. One of those sea-maidens haunted, if we may credit the district legends, a river in Galloway: the charms of her person were even surpassed by those of her voice: the first verse which she sung caused the wild birds to leave their nests, nor regard their enemy the owl; at the second verse, the fox leaped up from the lamb he had worried, and wiping his bloody lips, wondered what this might mean; but with the third verse, a gallant young bridegroom was so bewitched, that he left his bridal train, and approaching too close to the mermaiden, was seized and carried into one of her sea-palaces, and never more returned to upper air. Other legends, both Swedish and Scottish, relate similar stories of those alluring dames: one of their lovers, however, contrived by stratagem to escape from "coral caves and beds of pearl," and was heard to declare, that lovely as the sea-maidens were, they had a maritime savour about them which was anything but ambrosial.—C.

[n] *Scylla wept,*
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause.

Silius Italicus, of a Sicilian shepherd tuning his reed, "Bell. Pun." xix. 467:—
"Scyllæi tacuere canes; stetit atra Charybdis."—T. Warton."

The "barking waves," it must be added, are from Virgil, Æn. vii. 588, "multis circumlatrantibus undis."—Todd.

[o] *And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself, &c.*

Compare Shakspeare, "Winter's Tale," a. and s. ult.:—

O sweet Paulina!
Make me to think so twenty years together;
No settled senses of the world can match
The pleasure of that madness.—Todd.

[p] *Hail, foreign wonder!*

Thus Fletcher, "Faith. Shep." a. v. s. 1. But perhaps our author had an unperceived retrospect to the "Tempest," a. i. s. 2:—

Fer. Most sure the goddess
On whom these airs attend!————
———— My prime request,
Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!
If you be maid or no?—T. Warton.

[q] Comus's address to the Lady, from v. 265, to the end of this line, is in a very high style of classical gallantry. As Cicero says of Plato's language, that if Jupiter were to speak Greek, he would speak as Plato has written; so we may say of this language of Milton, that if Jupiter were to speak English, he would express himself in this manner. The passage is exceedingly beautiful in every respect; but all readers of taste will acknowledge, that the style of it is much raised by the expression "unless the goddess," an elliptical expression, unusual in our language, though common enough in Greek and Latin. But if we were to fill it up, and say, "unless thou beest the goddess," how flat and insipid would it make the composition, compared with what it is!—Lord Monboddo.

Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my sever'd company,
Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.
Com. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus[r]?
Lad. Dim darkness, and this leavie labyrinth.
Com. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?
Lad. They left me weary on a grassy turf.
Com. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?
Lad. To seek in the valley some cool friendly spring[s].
Com. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?
Lad. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.
Com. Perhaps forestalling[t] night prevented them.
Lad. How easy my misfortune is to hit!
Com. Imports their loss, beside the present need?
Lad. No less than if I should my brothers lose.
Com. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom[u]?
Lad. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips[v].
Com. Two such I saw what time the labour'd ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came[w],
And the swink'd hedger at his supper sat[x];
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots:

[r] Here is an imitation of those scenes in the Greek tragedies, where the dialogue proceeds by question and answer, a single verse being allotted to each. The Greeks, doubtless, found a grace in this sort of dialogue: as it was one of the characteristics of the Greek drama, it was natural enough for our young poet, passionately fond of the Greek tragedies, to affect this peculiarity; but he judged better in his riper years, there being no instance of this dialogue, I think, in his 'Samson Agonistes.'—HURD.

[s] *To seek in the valley some cool friendly spring.*

Here Mr. Sympson observed with me, that this is a different reason from what she had assigned before, v. 186:—"To bring me berries," &c. They might have left her on both accounts.—NEWTON.

[t] *Forestalling.*

The word forestall was formerly used in the sense of prevent, hinder, &c., as in 'Par. Lost,' b. x. 1024.—T. WARTON.

[u] *Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?*

Were they young men, or striplings? "Prime" is perfection. "Nature here wanton'd as in her prime," 'Par. Lost,' b. v. 295. Again, b. iii. 636:—

And now a stripling cherub he appears,
Not of the prime, &c.—T. WARTON.

[v] *Their unrazor'd lips.*

The unpleasant epithet "unrazor'd" has one much like it in the "Tempest," a. ii. s. 5:—

Till new-born chins
Are rough and razorable.—T. WARTON.

[w] *What time the labour'd ox*
In his loose traces from the furrow came.

The notation of time is in the pastoral manner, as in Virg. Ecl. ii. 66, and Hor. Od. III. vi. 41.—NEWTON.

[x] *And the swink'd hedger at his supper sat.*

The "swink'd hedger's supper" is from nature: and "hedger," a word new in poetry, although of common use, has a good effect. "Swink'd" is tired, fatigued.—T. WARTON.

Their port was more than human, as they stood:
I took it for a faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element[y],
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play in the plighted clouds[z]. I was awe-struck,
And, as I pass'd, I worshipp'd; if those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to heaven,
To help you find them.
Lad. Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
Com. Due west it rises from this shrubby point[a].
Lad. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practised feet.
Com. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side[b],

[y] *The element.*

In the north of England this term is still made use of for the sky.—THYER.

[z] *And play in the plighted clouds.*

The lustre of Milton's brilliant imagery is half obscured—while "plighted" remains unexplained. We are to understand the braided or embroidered clouds; in which certain airy elemental beings are most poetically supposed to sport, thus producing a variety of transient and dazzling colours, as our author says of the sun, 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 596:—

Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend.

It is obvious to observe that the modern word is "plaited."—T. WARTON.

Visions of the kind intimated by the poet were not uncommon in other days. It is related, that a traveller, happening to be both hungry and benighted among the pastoral hills of the Border, resolved to quit the road on which he was walking, and follow a little stream or brook which he knew would conduct him soon to some shepherd's hut or farm-house: the moon was up; the night was quiet and clear; no other sound save that of the stream was to be heard. On entering a little glen, he was startled to see a green table placed across the rivulet; and both his eyes and his sharpened sense of smell told him that it was furnished with meat and wine. He stood and gazed: the plates were of silver, the cups of gold; the meat seemed savoury, and the wine scented all the air. He could not for his heart resist the temptation; but he had the grace, before he began, to say "With your leave, good folk:" the words were not well out of his mouth, till fairies started up all around the table: one helped him to meat; another to wine; while a third, equally courteous, fashioned a good strong steady chair out of a mushroom for his accommodation. At parting, they bestowed a cup on him of a miraculous make, for it was ever full of wine, let the drinker be ever so drouthy. It continued in the family, till a guest, more devout than ordinary, proceeded to ask God's blessing on the liquor; when the cup became in an instant dry, and, it is said, continued so.—C.

[a] *Due west it rises from this shrubby point.*

Milton had perhaps a predilection for the west, from a similar but more picturesque information in "As you Like it," a. iv. s. i.:—

West of this place, down in the neighbour bottom, &c.—T. WARTON.

[b] *Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,*
And every bosky bourn from side to side, &c.

The word "dingle" is still in use, and signifies a valley between two steep hills. "Dimble" is the same word. A "bourn," the sense of which in this passage has never been explained with precision, properly signifies here, a winding, deep, and narrow valley, with a rivulet at the bottom. In the present instance, the declivities

My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;
And if your stray attendance be yet lodged,
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatch'd pallet rouse; if otherwise
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till farther quest.
  Lad. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named [c],
And yet is most pretended: in a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.—
Eye me, bless'd Providence, and square my trial
To my proportion'd strength!—shepherd, lead on. [*Exeunt.*

Enter the Two Brothers.

  El. Br. Unmuffle [d], ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison [e],
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud [f],

are interspersed with trees and bushes. This sort of valley Comus knew from "side to side:" he knew both the opposite sides or ridges, and had consequently travelled the intermediate space. Such situations have no other name in the west of England at this day. In the waste and open countries, bourns are the grand separations or divisions of one part of the country from another, and are natural limits of districts and parishes: for bourn is simply nothing more than a boundary.—T. Warton.

[c] *And courts of princes, where it first was named.*

Mr. Sympson perceived with me that this is plainly taken from Spenser, "Faer. Qu." vi. i. 1:—

Of court, it seems, men courtesie do call,
For that it there most useth to abound.—Newton.

[d] *Unmuffle.*

"Muffle" was not so low a word as at present. Drayton, "Heroic. Epis." vol. i. p. 251, of night:—

And in thick vapours muffle up the world.—T. Warton.

See also Shakspeare, "Romeo and Juliet," a. v. s. 3:—"Muffle me, night, awhile."—Todd.

[e] *That wont'st to love the traveller's benison.*

Mr. Richardson and Mr. Thyer here saw with me, that there was an allusion to Spenser, "Faer. Qu." iii. i. 43:—

As when fayre Cynthia, in darksome night,
Is in a noyous cloud enveloped,
Where she may finde the substance thin and light,
Breakes forth her silver beames, and her bright head
Discovers to the world discomfited;
Of the poore traveller that went astray,
With thousand blessings she is heried.—Newton.

[f] *Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud.*

See 'Il. Pens.' v. 71:—

And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.—Todd.

And disinherit Chaos[g], that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite damm'd up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us[h]
With thy long-level'd rule of streaming light[i];
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian cynosure[j].

Sec. Br. Or, if our eyes
Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks[k] penn'd in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous[l] boughs.
But, O, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, among rude burs and thistles;
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears.
What, if in wild amazement and affright;
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

El. Br. Peace, brother; be not over-exquisite[m]

[g] *Disinherit Chaos.*

This expression should be animadverted upon, as hyperbolical and bombast, and akin to that in Scriblerus, "Mow my beard."—Jos. Warton.

[h] *Visit us, &c.*

See 'Par. Lost,' b. ii. 398:—"Not unvisited of heaven's fair light:" and St. Luke i. 78:—"The dayspring from on high hath visited us."—T. Warton.

[i] *Long-level'd rule of streaming light.*

The sun is said to "level his evening rays," 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 543.—T. Warton.

[j] *Our star of Arcady,*
Or Tyrian cynosure.

Our greater or lesser bear-star. Calisto, the daughter of Lycaon, king of Arcadia, was changed into the greater bear, called also Helice, and her son Arcas into the lesser, called also Cynosura, by observing of which the Tyrians and Sidonians steered their course, as the Grecian mariners did by the other. See Ovid, "Fast." iii. 107, and Val. Flaccus, "Argon." i 17.—Newton.

[k] *The folded flocks, &c.*

Compare, as Mr. Warton directs, 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 185. And see the notes on Milton's 'Epitaphium Damonis,' ver. 140.—Todd.

[l] *Innumerous.*

"Innumerous" is uncommon. But see 'Par. Lost,' b. vii. 455:—"Innumerous living creatures." The expression, "innumerous boughs," has been adopted in Pope's Odyssey.—T. Warton.

[m] *Exquisite.*

"Exquisite" was not now uncommon in its more original signification. Beaumont and Fletcher, "Little Fr. Law." a. v. s. 1:—

They are exquisite in mischief.—T. Warton.

To cast the fashion of uncertain evils[n]:
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown[o],
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in Virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not[p])
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light[q], though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk; and Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude[r];
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation[s],
She plumes her feathers[t], and lets grow her wings,

[n] *To cast the fashion of uncertain evils.*

A metaphor taken from the founder's art.—WARBURTON.

Rather from astrology, as "to cast a nativity." The meaning is to predict, prefigure, compute, &c.—T. WARTON.

[o] This line obscures the thought, and loads the expression. It had been better out, as any one may see by reading the passage without it.—WARBURTON.

[p] *As that the single want of light and noise*
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not).

A profound critic cites the entire context, as containing a beautiful example of Milton's using the parenthesis, a figure which he has frequently used with great effect. —"Origin and Prog. of Language," b. iv. p. ii. vol. iii. p. 76. Some perhaps may think this beauty quite accidental and undesigned. A parenthesis is often thrown in for the sake of explanation, after a passage is written.—T. WARTON.

[q] *Virtue could see to do what Virtue would*
By her own radiant light.

It has been noticed by many critics, that this noble sentiment was inspired from Spenser, "Faerie Queen," I. i. 12:—

Virtue gives herselfe light through darknesse for to wade.

But may not Jonson here be also noticed, who, in his Mask, "Pleasure reconciled to Virtue" (to which I have ventured to assign other allusions in 'Comus'), says of Virtue:—

She, she it is in darknesse shines;
'Tis she that still herself refines,
By her own light to every eye.—TODD.

[r] *Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude.*

For the same uncommon use of "seek," Mr. Bowle cites Bale's "Examinacyon of A. Askew," p. 24:—"Hath not he moche nede of helpe who seeketh to soche a surgeon?" So also in Isaiah xi. 10:—"To it shall the Gentiles seek."—T. WARTON.

[s] *Her best nurse, Contemplation.*

In Sidney's "Arcadia," Solitude is the nurse of Contemplation, b. i. p. 31, edit. 1674. "Such contemplation, or more excellent, I enjoy in solitariness; and my solitariness is perchance the nurse of these contemplations."—DUNSTER.

[t] *She plumes her feathers.*

I believe the true reading to be "prunes," which Lawes ignorantly altered to "plumes," afterwards imperceptibly continued in the poet's own edition. To "prune

That in the various bustle of resort
Were all-to ruffled [u], and sometimes impair'd.
He, that has light within his own clear breast,
May sit in the centre, and enjoy bright day [v]:
But he, that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon [w].
Sec. Br. 'Tis most true,
That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secresy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house [x];
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?
But Beauty [y], like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye [z],

wings," is to smoothe, or set them in order, when ruffled: for this is the leading idea. Spenser, "Faer. Qu." II. iii. 36:—

She 'gins her feathers foule disfigured
Proudly to prune.—T. WARTON.

[u] *Were all-to ruffled.*

So read as in editions 1637, 1645, and 1673. Not *too*, nimis. "All-to," or "al-to," is entirely. See Tyrwhitt's Glossary, Chaucer, v. *To*. And Upton's Glossary, Spenser, v. *All*. Various instances occur in Chaucer and Spenser, and in later writers. The corruption, supposed to be an emendation, "all too ruffled," began with Tickell (who had no knowledge of our old language), and has been continued by Fenton, and Dr. Newton. Tonson has the true reading, in 1695, and 1705.—T. WARTON.

See Judges ix. 53:—"And a certain woman cast a piece of a mill-stone upon Abimelech's head, and all-to brake his skull:" for so it should be printed. Some editions of the Bible corruptly read, "all to break," placing the verb improperly in the infinitive mood.—TODD.

[v] *He, that has light within his own clear breast,*
May sit in the centre, and enjoy bright day.

So, in his 'Prose Works,' i. 217, edit. 1698:—"The actions of just and pious men do not darken in their middle course; but Solomon tells us, they are as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—TODD.

[w] *Himself is his own dungeon.*

In 'Samson Agonistes,' v. 155, the Chorus apply this solemn and forcible expression to the captive and afflicted hero:—

Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
The dungeon of thyself.—TODD.

[x] *And sits as safe as in a senate-house.*

Not many years after this was written, Milton's friends showed that the safety of a senate-house was not inviolable; but, when the people turn legislators, what place is safe from the tumults of innovation, and the insults of disobedience?—T. WARTON.

[y] *But beauty, &c.*

These sentiments are heightened from the "Faithful Shepherdess," a. i. s. 1:—

Can such beauty be
Safe in its own guard, and not drawe the eye
Of him that passeth on, to greedy gaze, &c.—T. WARTON.

[z] *With unenchanted eye.*

That is, which cannot be enchanted. Here is more flattery; but certainly such as

To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass[a]
Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night, or loneliness, it recks me not;
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned sister.
El. Br. I do not, brother,
Infer as if I thought my sister's state
Secure, without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise[b] of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope, rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint suspicion[c].
My sister is not so defenceless left

was justly due, and which no poet in similar circumstances could resist the opportunity, or rather the temptation, of paying.—T. WARTON.

When the Christian religion supplanted the pagan worship, such was the attachment even of zealous converts to the old-established days of jubilee and joy in honour of the gods and goddesses of Olympus, that it was found necessary to do something of the sort for the Christian cause; and accordingly a long line of saints, male and female, took possession of the set times of heathen jubilee, and reigned in the stead of Diana and Apollo. In like manner, the domestic mythology of the pagans yielded to that of the Christian; and the deeds which the infernal gods wrought of old were now accomplished by their successor Satan. Instead of a dragon being placed as a sentinel over concealed treasure of any kind, one of the inferior fiends was reluctantly compelled to perform the office: the corsairs in latter times carried this much farther, and, it is said, slew a prisoner over their treasure-chest, and commanded his spirit to keep watch and ward. When Dalswinton castle was stormed and taken by Robert Bruce, Comyn, who was very rich, caused his strong-box to be sunk in one of the deepest pools in the Nith, which in those days ran close by the castle walls. Times of peace returned, and a diver was employed to search for the gold; but when he descended to the bottom of the pool, he found, it is said, a fiend seated on the lid of the treasure-chest, who not only seemed disposed to contest the matter, but, as our version of the legend avers, actually held a human victim under each paw, and with his mouth gaped wistfully for a third. Two divers, it seems, had tried the adventure before, and failed; nor did the third and last succeed.—C.

[a] *And let a single helpless maiden pass, &c.*

Rosalind argues in the same manner, in "As you Like it," a. i. s. 3:—

Alas! what danger will it be to us,
Maids as we are, to travel forth so far!
Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.—T. WARTON.

[b] *Yet, where an equal poise, &c.*

"Boni animi proprium est in dubiis meliora supponere, donec probetur in contrarium," Mat. Paris, "Hist." p. 774.—BOWLE.

[c] *And gladly banish squint suspicion.*

Alluding probably, in the epithet, to Spenser's description of Suspicion, in his Mask of Cupid, "Faerie Queene," III. xii. 15:—

For he was foul, ill-favoured, and grim,
Under his eye-brows looking still ascaunce.—THYER.

As you may imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.
Sec. Br. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?
El. Br. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be term'd her own:
'Tis Chastity, my brother, Chastity:
She, that has that, is clad in complete steel;
And like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen [d],
May trace huge forests [e], and unharbour'd heaths,
Infamous hills [f], and sandy perilous wilds,
Where, through the sacred rays of Chastity [g],
No savage, fierce bandite, or mountaineer [h],
Will dare to soil her virgin purity:
Yea, there, where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblench'd [i] majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say, no evil thing that walks by night [j]
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen [k],

[d] *And, like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen.*

I make no doubt but Milton in this passage had his eye upon Spenser's Belphœbe, whose character, arms, and manner of life perfectly correspond with this description.—THYER.

[e] *May trace huge forests, &c.*

Shakspeare's Oberon, as Mr. Bowle observes, would breed his child-knight to "trace the forests wild," "Midsummer Night's Dream," a. ii. s. 3. In Jonson's "Masques," a fairy says, vol. v. 206:—

Only we are free to trace
All his grounds, as he to chase.—T. WARTON.

[f] *Infamous hills.*

Horace, Od. I. iii. 20:—"Infames scopulos," as Dr. Newton observes. P. Fletcher, in his "Pisc. Ecl." published in 1633, has "infamous woods and downs."—TODD.

[g] *Where, through the sacred rays of Chastity, &c.*

See Fletcher, "Faithful Shepherdess," a. i. s. 1.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Mountaineer.*

A mountaineer seems to have conveyed the idea of something very savage and ferocious. In the "Tempest," a. iii. s. 3:—

Who would believe that there were mountaineers
Dewlapp'd like bulls?

In "Cymbeline," a. iv. s. 3:—

Who call'd me traitor, mountaineer.—T. WARTON.

[i] *Unblench'd.*

Unblinded, unconfounded.—WARTON.

[j] *Some say, no evil thing that walks by night.*

Milton had Shakspeare in his head, "Hamlet," a. i. s. 1:—

Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated—
But then, they say, no spirit walks abroad.

Another superstition is ushered in with the same form in 'Paradise Lost,' b. x. 575. And the same form occurs in the description of the physical effects of Adam's fall, b. x. 668.—T. WARTON.

[k] *In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen, &c.*

Milton here had his eye on the "Faithful Shepherdess," a. i. He has borrowed the sentiment, but raised and improved the diction:—

Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost
That breaks his magick chains at curfeu time[l],
No goblin, or swart faery of the mine[m],

I have heard (my mother told it me,
And now I do believe it) if I keep
My virgin flower uncropt, pure, chaste, and fair,
No goblin, wood-god, fairy, elfe, or fiend,
Satyr, or other power that haunts the groves,
Shall hurt my body, or by vain illusion
Draw me to wander after idle fires;
Or voices calling me, &c —NEWTON.

[l] *Stubborn unlaid ghost*
That breaks his magick chains at curfeu time.

An unlaid ghost was among the most vexatious plagues of the world of spirits. It is one of the evils deprecated at Fidele's grave, in "Cymbeline," a. iv. s. 2:—

No exorciser harm thee,
Nor no witchcraft charm thee,
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!—T. WARTON.

That Milton looked with learned eyes on the superstitious beliefs which he wrought into his verse, these lines bear proof, but his learning adorned rather than oppressed popular fiction: the horned and hoofed fiend of Gothic belief became in his hands a sort of infernal Apollo: the witch who drained cows dry, shook ripe corn, and sunk venturous boats, grew with him "a blue meagre hag," a description which inspired the pencil of Fuseli. The "midnight hags" of British belief suffered a sore change in their persons during the course of time. When we first hear of them, instead of all being "beldames auld and droll," they counted in their ranks much youth and beauty; music and dancing made a part of their entertainments; nor did they hesitate to mount their ragweed nags: and, picking up some handsome and wandering youth by the way, carry him with them; and initiating him into the mysteries of love and wine, set him down on Mount Caucasus, and let him find his way back to Plinlimmon or Shehallion as he best could. The witches of latter days were all old, withered, unlovely, and repulsive; their pranks, too, were of a low order, and their spells easily averted. A wand of mountain-ash protected a whole herd of cows; a neck-band of the red berries of the same tree was a full security to the wearer: nay, devout and skilful people retaliated upon them, and made them suffer greater miseries than they were able to inflict.—C.

[m] *Swart faery of the mine.*

In the Gothic system of pneumatology, mines were supposed to be inhabited by various sorts of spirits. See Olaus Magnus's chapter "De Metallicis Dæmonibus, Hist. Gent. Septentrional." In an old translation of Lavaterus "De Spectris et Lemuribus," is the following passage:—"Pioners or diggers for metall do affirme, that in many mines there appeare straunge shapes and spirites, who are apparelled like vnto the laborers in the pit. These wander vp and downe in caues and underminings, and seeme to besturre themselves in all kinde of labor; as, to digge after the veine, to carrie together the oare, to put into basketts, and to turn the winding wheele to draw it vp, when in very deed they do nothinge lesse," &c.—"Of Ghostes and Spirites walking by night," &c. Lond. 1572, ch. xvi. p. 73. And hence we see why Milton gives this species of fairy a swarthy or dark complexion.—T. WARTON.

The true British goblin, called elsewhere by Milton the "lubbar fiend," and by the Scotch poets the "billie-blin" or "brownie," is a sort of drudging domestic fiend, slightly inclined to work mischief on sluttish housemaids and lazy hinds, but not at all disposed to injure virgins, or harm the good and the industrious. Indeed the main business of the brownie seems to have been to watch over the flocks, the crops, and the fortunes of the house to which he was attached. He has been known to reap a twenty-acre field of corn between twilight and dawn, as much for the purpose of astonishing the reapers, as to prevent it from being shaken by the wind. Milton himself ascribes to him the power of threshing as much grain at a time as ten day-labourers could do; and tradition says, that on one occasion, when a drowsy domestic was unwilling to ride and bring the midwife for the mistress of the mansion, brownie mounted the saddled horse, brought the dame with supernatural haste, and finished his excursion by flogging the lazy menial with the iron-bitted bridle till he cried for mercy. The elfin page of Scott is a more elegant sort of

Hath hurtful power o'er true Virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of Chastity?
Hence[n] had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen, for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at naught
The frivolous bolt of Cupid[o]; gods and men
Fear'd her stern frown, and she was queen of the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield,
That wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congeal'd stone,
But rigid looks[p] of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dash'd brute violence[q]
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity,
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lacky her[r],
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
And in clear dream and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear[s];

brownie; but tradition always represents the latter as a solitary creature, that shuns the sight of man, and of whom only one glimpse in twenty years could be obtained by the most watchful and wary. He accepted only the choicest food, such as cream and honey; his stature was about half the human height; his complexion was brown; his arms long, and his strength immense. He seems to have been utterly naked, and it is known that he had no partiality to clothes; for when the brownie of Lethan-hall was presented with a new mantle and hood, he was heard wailing like a child for three nights; after which he departed, and returned no more.—C.

[n] *Hence, &c.*

Milton, I fancy, took the hint of this beautiful mythological interpretation from a dialogue of Lucian, betwixt Venus and Cupid; where the mother asking her son how, after having attacked all the other deities, he came to spare Minerva and Diana, Cupid replies, that the former looked so fiercely at him, and frightened him so with the Gorgon head which she wore upon her breast, that he durst not meddle with her; and that as to Diana, she was always so employed in hunting, that he could not catch her.—THYER.

[o] *The frivolous bolt of Cupid.*

This reminds one of "the dribbling dart of love," in "Measure for Measure." "Bolt," I believe, is properly the arrow of a crossbow.—T. WARTON.

See Shakspeare, "Mids. Night's Dream," a. ii. s. 2:—

Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell.—TODD.

[p] *But rigid looks, &c.*

"Rigid looks" refer to the snaky locks, and "noble grace" to the beautiful face, as Gorgon is represented on ancient gems.—WARBURTON.

[q] *Brute violence.*

See 'Par. Reg.' b. i. 218.—THYER.

[r] *A thousand liveried angels lacky her.*

The idea, without the lowness of allusion and expression, is repeated in 'Par. Lost,' b. viii. 559:—

About her as a guard angelick placed.—T. WARTON.

[s] *Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear.*

See 'Arcades,' v. 72. This dialogue between the two Brothers is an amicable contest between fact and philosophy: the younger draws his arguments from common apprehen-

Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind[t],
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence[u],
Till all be made immortal: but when lust,
By unchaste looks[v], loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts;
The soul grows clotted by contagion[w],

sion, and the obvious appearance of things: the elder proceeds on a profounder knowledge, and argues from abstracted principles. Here the difference of their ages is properly made subservient to a contrast of character: but this slight variety must have been insufficient to keep so prolix and learned a disputation alive upon the stage: it must have languished, however adorned with the fairest flowers of eloquence. The whole dialogue, which indeed is little more than a solitary declamation in blank verse, much resembles the manner of our author's Latin Prolusions, where philosophy is enforced by pagan fable and poetical allusion.—T. WARTON.

[t] *The unpolluted temple of the mind.*

For this beautiful metaphor he was probably indebted to St. John ii. 21:—"He spake of the temple of his body:" and Shakspeare has the same, "Tempest," a. i. s. 6:—

There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple.—NEWTON.

[u] *And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence.*

This is agreeable to the system of the materialists, of which Milton was one.—WARBURTON.

The same notion of body's working up to spirit Milton afterwards introduced into his 'Par. Lost,' b. v. 469, &c., which is there, I think, liable to some objection, as he was entirely at liberty to have chosen a more rational system, and as it is also put into the mouth of an archangel: but in this place it falls in so well with the poet's design, gives such a force and strength to this encomium on chastity, and carries in it such a dignity of sentiment; that, however repugnant it may be to our philosophical ideas, it cannot miss striking and delighting every virtuous and intelligent reader.—THYER.

[v] *By unchaste looks, &c.*

"He [Christ] censures an unchaste look to be an adultery already committed: another time he passes over actual adultery with less reproof than for an unchaste look," 'Divorce,' b. ii. c. 1. Matth. v. 28.—T. WARTON.

[w] *The soul grows clotted by contagion, &c.*

I cannot resist the pleasure of translating a passage in Plato's "Phædon," which Milton here evidently copies:—"A soul with such affections, does it not fly away to something divine and resembling itself? To something divine, immortal, and wise? Whither when it arrives, it becomes happy; being freed from error, ignorance, fear, love, and other human evils. But if it departs from the body polluted and impure, with which it has been long linked in a state of familiarity and friendship, and by whose pleasures and appetites it has been bewitched, so as to think nothing else true but what is corporeal, and which may be touched, seen, drunk, and used for the gratifications of lust; at the same time, if it has been accustomed to hate, fear, or shun whatever is dark and invisible to the human eye, yet discerned and approved by philosophy;—I ask, if a soul so disposed will go sincere and disencumbered from the body? By no means. And will it not be, as I have supposed, infected and involved with corporeal contagion, which an acquaintance and converse with the body, from a perpetual association, has made congenial? So I think. But, my friend, we must pronounce that substance to be ponderous, depressive, and earthy, which such a soul draws with it; and therefore it is burdened by such a clog, and again is dragged off to some visible place, for fear of that which is hidden and unseen; and, as they report, retires to tombs and sepulchres, among which the shadowy phantasms of these brutal souls, being loaded with somewhat visible, have often actually appeared. Probably, O Socrates: and it is equally probable, O Cebes, that these are the souls of wicked, not virtuous men, which are forced to wander amidst burial places, suffering the punishment of an impious life: and they so long are seen hovering about the monuments

Imbodies, and imbrutes [x], till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp,
Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres
Lingering, and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And link'd itself by carnal sensuality
To a degenerate and degraded state.
Sec. Br. How charming is divine philosophy [y]!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose;
But musical as is Apollo's lute [z],
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.
El. Br. List, list; I hear
Some far-off halloo break the silent air.
Sec. Br. Methought so too; what should it be?
El. Br. For certain
Either some one like us night-founder'd here,
Or else some neighbour woodman, or at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.
Sec. Br. Heaven keep my sister. Again, again, and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
El. Br. I'll halloo:
If he be friendly, he comes well; if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us.

Enter the Attendant Spirit, *habited like a shepherd.*

That halloo I should know; what are you? speak;
Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else.

of the dead till, from the accompaniment of the sensualities of corporeal nature, they are again clothed with a body,"&c. Phæd. Opp. Plat. p. 386, ed. Lugd. 1590, fol. An admirable writer, the late Bishop of Worcester, has justly remarked, that "this poetical philosophy nourished the fine spirits of Milton's time, though it corrupted some." It is highly probable, that Henry More, the great Platonist, who was Milton's contemporary at Christ's College, might have given his mind an early bias to the study of Plato.—T. Warton.

[x] *Imbodies, and imbrutes.*

Thus also Satan speaks of the debasement and corruption of its original divine essence, 'Par. Lost,' b. ix. 165:—

mix'd with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the highth of Deity aspired.—T. Warton.

[y] *How charming is divine philosophy!*

This is an immediate reference to the foregoing speech, in which the divine philosophy of Plato concerning the nature and condition of the human soul after death is so largely and so nobly displayed. Much the same sentiments appear in the 'Tractate on Education:'—"I shall not detain you longer in the demonstration of what we should not do; but straight conduct you to a hill-side, where I will point ye out the right path of a vertuous and noble education, laborious indeed at the first ascent, but also so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect and melodious sounds, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming," p. 101, ed. 1675. And see 'Par. Reg.' b. i. 478, &c.—T. Warton.

[z] *But musical as is Apollo's lute.*

Perhaps from "Love's Labour's Lost," as Mr. Bowle suggests, a. iv. s. 3:—

As sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute.—T. Warton.

Spir. What voice is that? my young lord? speak again.
Sec. Br. O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.
El. Br. Thyrsis? whose artful strains[a] have oft delay'd
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal[b],
And sweeten'd every muskrose of the dale?
How camest thou here, good swain? hath any ram
Slipp'd from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How couldst thou find this dark sequester'd nook[c]?
Spir. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf: not all the fleecy wealth,
That doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, O my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?
El. Br. To tell thee sadly[d], shepherd, without blame,
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.
Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.
El. Br. What fears, good Thyrsis? Pr'ythee briefly shew.
Spir. I'll tell ye; 'tis not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance),

[a] *Thyrsis? whose artful strains, &c.*

A compliment to Lawes, who personated the Spirit. We have just such another above, v. 86, but this being spoken by another, comes with better grace and propriety; or, to use Dr. Newton's pertinent expression, is more genteel. Milton's eagerness to praise his friend Lawes, makes him here forget the circumstances of the fable: he is more intent on the musician than the shepherd, who comes at a critical season, and whose assistance in the present difficulty should have hastily been asked: but time is lost in a needless encomium, and in idle enquiries how the shepherd could possibly find out this solitary part of the forest; the youth, however, seems to be ashamed or unwilling to tell the unlucky accident that had befallen his sister. Perhaps the real boyism of the brother, which yet should have been forgotten by the poet, is to be taken into the account.—T. Warton.

Let it be remembered that 'Comus' is a drama of poetic description rather than theatric interest: besides, I conceive it exactly in nature for such young adventurers to delight in having their solitude and distress relieved by the acquisition of the aid and company of a faithful domestic of the family: and I farther believe that it is a fine touch of real nature to represent them at the immediate moment forgetting, in a certain degree, their own immediate distress, and recurring to the well-known amusements and employments of their old shepherd, his skill in pastoral music, his zealous care of his flock, &c., all these domestic circumstances recurring to their minds. Surely this is perfectly in nature; and if we criticise such passages, it should certainly be to commend, and not to censure.—Dunster.

[b] *Madrigal.*

The madrigal was a species of musical composition, now actually in practice, and in high vogue. Lawes, here intended, had composed madrigals: so had Milton's father. The word is not here thrown out at random.—T. Warton.

[c] *How couldst thou find this dark sequester'd nook?*

Thus the shepherdess Clorin to Thenot, Fletcher's "Faith. Shep." a. ii. s. 1.—T. Warton.

[d] *Sadly.*

Sadly, soberly, seriously, as the word is frequently used by our old authors, and in 'Par. Lost,' b. vi. 541.—Newton.

What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old, in high immortal verse,
Of dire chimeras, and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell [e];
For such there be; but unbelief is blind.
Within the navel [f] of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries;
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mix'd [g], whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead [h], unmoulding reason's mintage

[e] *Storied of old, in high immortal verse,*
Of dire chimeras, and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell.

The "chimeras dire" of ancient verse have passed away from popular belief; not so the "enchanted isles," and the "rifted rocks," whose entrance leads to perdition; the former are to be found in Scandinavian song; and, not to go farther, the volcanic mountains not inaptly support a belief in the existence of the latter. The old Danish ballad of Saint Oluf relates how the devout hero conquered the Jutt and the elves of Hornclumner, and transformed them into rocks and stones, forms which they still keep. Other instances might be given from both tale and song. That Ætna was till lately believed to be one of the entrances to Satan's realms is sufficiently intimated by a northern tradition, which relates, that on the very day and hour in which an eminent British statesman died, a traveller was startled with the vision of a coach and six galloping full speed up the burning mountain: as the pageant swept past, he heard a voice exclaim, "Ho! make way for his grace of Q——." In this way the poetic peasantry of the north avenged themselves on a nobleman, whose actions were not to their mind.—C.

[f] *Within the navel.*

That is, in the midst; a phrase borrowed from the Greeks and Latins.—NEWTON.

[g] *With many murmurs mix'd.*

That is, in preparing this enchanted cup, the charm of many barbarous unintelligible words was intermixed, to quicken and strengthen its operation.—WARBURTON.

[h] *The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,*
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead.

The cup of Circe is now dry, and her enchantments are despised; nor have we any drink in traditionary belief which rivals the "pleasing poison" of the goddess. We have something almost equivalent: an ointment belongs to the fairies, which opens mortal eyes to things immortal, and shows the spirits of good and evil that watch over man. Our witches too have magic staves and magic words, which can transform a hare into a horse, or a ragwort into a pony: nay, one of them, as the legend relates, inherited a magic bridle of such wondrous powers, that when she chose to shake it over a man's head, he instantly became a steed, and an obedient one, to carry her on her midnight errands. This gifted dame had two servant lads, one lean, the other fat: on the latter upbraiding the former with the humility of his appearance, he answered,—"Lie at the bed stock, and ye will be lean too." The exchange was made; at midnight the beldame approached with her bridle; and before he could mutter an averting prayer, he was transformed into a horse, and compelled to bear her over stock and stone to an assembly of sister hags. By prayer and exertion he freed himself from the bridle, and, restored to his own shape, awaited the return of his mistress: before she was aware, he shook the bridle over her head, transformed her to a palfrey, and switched her mercilessly through "dub and mire." The adventure ended in a compromise; the witch became kindly and tolerant, and never employed the enchanted bridle on man again.—C.

Character'd in the face[i]: this have I learn'd,
Tending my flocks hard by in the hilly crofts,
That brow this bottom-glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl[j],
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey[k],
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscured haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells,
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper[l] on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honey-suckle[m]; and began,
Wrapp'd in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy[n],
Till fancy had her fill; but, ere a close[o],
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listen'd them a while,

[i] *Character'd in the face.*

So, in his 'Divorce,' b. i. pref.:—"A law not only written by Moses, but charactered in us by nature."—T. WARTON.

[j] *He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl, &c.*

Such was the practice of Comus's mother, Circe. Ovid, Met. xiv. 405:—

Magicis Hecaten ululatibus orat.—TODD.

[k] *Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey.*

Perhaps from Virgil, Æn. vii. 15, of Circe's island:—

Hinc exaudiri gemitus, iræque leonum,
—— ac formæ magnorum ululare luporum
Quos hominum ex facie Dea sæva potentibus herbis
Induerat Circe in vultus ac terga ferarum.—NEWTON.

[l] *Had ta'en their supper, &c.*

The supper of the sheep is from a beautiful comparison in Spenser, "Faerie Qu." I. i. 23:—

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide,
When ruddy Phebus gins to welke in west,
High on a hill, his flocke to vewen wide,
Markes which doe byte their hasty supper best.—T. WARTON.

[m] *With ivy canopied, and interwove*
With flaunting honey-suckle.

Perhaps from Shakspeare, "Mids. Night's Dr." a. ii. s. 2:—

Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine.—T. WARTON.

[n] *To meditate my rural minstrelsy.*

Virgil, Bucol. i. 2:—

Sylvestrum tenui Musam meditaris avena.

So in 'Lycidas,' v. 66:—

Or strictly meditate the thankless Muse.—T. WARTON.

[o] *But, ere a close.*

A musical close on his pipe. As in Shakspeare, "K. Rich. II." a. ii. s. 1:—

The setting sun, and music at the close,
As the last taste of sweets is sweetest last.—T. WARTON.

Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy frighted steeds[p],
That draw the litter of close-curtain'd sleep[q]:
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound[r]
Rose like a stream of rich distill'd perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence[s]
Was took ere she was ware, and wish'd she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear[t],
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death[u]: but, O! ere long,

[p] *The drowsy frighted steeds, &c.*

I read, according to Milton's manuscript, "drowsy-flighted:" and this genuine reading Dr. Dalton has also preserved in 'Comus.' "Drowsie frighted" is nonsense, and manifestly an error of the press in all the editions. There can be no doubt, that in this passage Milton had his eye upon the description of night, in "K. Hen. VI." p. II. a. iv. s. 1:—

> And now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades
> That drag the tragic melancholy night,
> Who with their drowsy, slow, and flagging wings
> Clip dead men's graves.

The idea and the expression of "drowsie-flighted" in the one, are plainly copied from their drowsy, slow, and flagging wings in the other.—Newton.

It must be allowed, that "drowsie-flighted" is a very harsh combination. Notwithstanding the Cambridge manuscript exhibits "drowsie-flighted," yet "drowsie frighted" without a composition, is a more rational and easy reading, and invariably occurs in the editions 1637, 1645, and 1673. That is, "the drowsy steeds of Night, who were affrighted on this occasion, at the barbarous dissonance of Comus's nocturnal revelry." Milton made the emendation after he had forgot his first idea.—T. Warton.

[q] *Close-curtain'd sleep.*

Perhaps from Shakspeare, "Macbeth," a. ii. s. 1:—

> And wicked dreams abuse
> The curtain'd sleep.—Thyer.

[r] *At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound, &c.*

Shakspeare's "Twelfth Night," at the beginning, has here been alleged by Mr. Thyer. The idea is strongly implied in the following lines from Jonson's "Vision of Delight," a Mask presented at Court in the Christmas of 1617:—

> Yet let it like an odour rise
> To all the senses here;
> And fall like sleep upon their eyes,
> Or musicke in their eare.

But the thought appeared before, where it is exquisitely expressed, in Bacon's "Essays:"—"And because the breath of flowers is farre sweeter in the aire, where it comes and goes like the warbling of musicke." Of Gardens, Ess. xlvi.—T. Warton.

[s] *That even Silence, &c.*

Silence was pleased at the nightingale's song, 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 604. The conceit in both passages is unworthy the poet.—T. Warton.

[t] *I was all ear.*

So Catullus of a rich perfume, "Carm." xiii. 13:—

> Quod tu cum olfacies, Deos rogabis
> Totum ut te faciant, Fabulle, nasum.

So Shakspeare, "Winter's Tale," a. iv. s. 3:—"All their other senses stuck in their ears:" and, in the "Tempest," Prospero says, "No tongues; all eyes; be silent."—T. Warton.

[u] *That might create a soul*
Under the ribs of death.

The general image of creating a soul by harmony is again from Shakspeare: but the

Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honour'd Lady, your dear sister.
Amazed I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear [v],
And, O poor hapless nightingale, thought I,
How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day;
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place,
Where that damn'd wisard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent Lady, his wish'd prey;
Who gently ask'd if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess'd
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But farther know I not.
  Sec. Br. O night, and shades!
How are ye join'd with hell in triple knot
Against the unarm'd weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?
  El. Br. Yes, and keep it still [w];
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me: against the threats
Of malice, or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm;—
Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt;
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
Yea, even that, which mischief meant most harm,
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory:
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness; when at last,
Gather'd like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change

particular one of "a soul under the ribs of death," which is extremely grotesque, is taken from a picture in Alciat's "Emblems," where a soul in the figure of an infant is represented within the ribs of a skeleton, as in its prison. This curious picture is presented by Quarles.—WARBURTON.

The picture alluded to is not taken from Alciat's "Emblems," but from Herman Hugo's "Pia Desideria;" and is the eighth; "Suspirium animæ amantis."—TODD.

[v] *Harrow'd with grief and fear.*

To "harrow" is to conquer, to subdue. The word is of Saxon origin. Thus Shakspeare, "Hamlet," a. i. s. 1:—"It harrows me with fear and wonder."—STEEVENS.

[w] *Yes, and keep it still, &c.*

This confidence of the Elder Brother in favour of the final efficacy of virtue holds forth a very high strain of philosophy, delivered in as high strains of eloquence and poetry.—T. WARTON.

It exhibits the sublimer sentiments of the Christian. Religion here gave energy to the poet's strains.—TODD.

Self-fed and self-consumed[x]: if this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble[y].—But come; let's on.
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up!
But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt
With all the grisly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron[z],
Harpies and hydras, or all the monstrous forms[a]
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.
Spir. Alas! good venturous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead;
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those, that quell the might of hellish charms[b]:
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews[c].
El. Br. Why, pr'ythee, shepherd,

[x] *Self-fed and self-consumed.*

This image is wonderfully fine. It is taken from the conjectures of astronomers concerning the dark spots which from time to time appear on the surface of the sun's body, and after a while disappear again; which they suppose to be the scum of that fiery matter, which first breeds it, and then breaks through and consumes it.—WARBURTON.

[y] *If this fail,*
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.

This is Shakspeare's thought, but in more exalted language, "Wint. Tale," a. ii. s. 1:—

If I mistake
In those foundations which I build upon,
The centre is not big enough to bear
A schoolboy's top.—STEEVENS.

[z] *The sooty flag of Acheron.*

Compare P. Fletcher's "Locusts," 1627, p. 58:—

All hell run out, and sooty flagges display.—TODD.

[a] *Harpies and hydras, &c.*

Harpies and hydras are a combination in an enumeration of monsters, in Sylvester's "Du Bart." p. 206, fol.:—

And the ugly Gorgons, and the sphinxes fell,
Hydras and harpies, &c.—T. WARTON.

[b] *The might of hellish charms.*

Compare Shakspeare's "King Richard III." a. iii. s. 4:—

With devilish plots
Of damned witchcraft; and that have prevail'd
Upon my body with their hellish charms.—T. WARTON.

[c] *He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,*
And crumble all thy sinews.

So, in Prospero's commands to Ariel, "Tempest," a. iv. s. ult.:—

Go, charge my goblins, that they grind their joints
With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews
With aged cramps.—T. WARTON.

How durst thou then thyself approach so near,
As to make this relation?
Spir. Care, and utmost shifts,
How to secure the Lady from surprisal,
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd
In every virtuous plant, and healing herb,
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray:
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy;
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties:
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out;
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteem'd [d], and the dull swain

[d] *Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:*
Unknown, and like esteem'd, &c.

Doctor Newton says, that "redundant verses sometimes occur in Milton." True: but the redundant syllable is never, I think, found in the second, third, or fourth foot. His instance of v. 605, in this poem,

Harpies and hydras, or all the monstrous forms—

where the redundancy is in the third foot, and forms an anapest, does not prove his point. The passage before us is certainly corrupt, or at least inaccurate; and had better, I think, been given thus:—

But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, not in this soil
Unknown, though light esteem'd.—HURD.

Seward proposed to read,

but in this soil
Unknown and light esteem'd.

The emendation is very plausible and ingenious. But to say nothing of the editions under Milton's own inspection, I must object, that, if an argument be here drawn for the alteration from roughness or redundancy of verse, innumerable instances of the kind occur in our author. Milton, notwithstanding his singular skill in music, appears to have had a very bad ear; and it is hard to say on what principle he modulated his lines.—T. WARTON.

By another accomplished writer the passage before us is considered as one of those licenses, which are not disagreeable in dramatic, although they would certainly displease in heroic verse:—

Bore a | bright gol | den flower, | but not in | this soil.

See Mitford's "Essay upon the Harmony of Language," first ed. p. 129. To the remark on "Milton's ear," the niceness of which more conspicuously displays itself in 'Comus,' the following observation, or general rule, may be safely opposed:—"There is no kind or degree of harmony, of which our language is capable, which may not be found in numberless instances in Milton's writings; the excellency of whose ear seems to have been equal to that of his imagination and learning." See Foster's "Essay on Accent," second ed. p. 67.—TODD.

I am astonished at Warton's observation, that Milton had a very bad ear. The line ought to be scanned thus:—

Bōre ă bright | gōldĕn | flōwer, bŭt | nŏt ĭn | thĭs sōil.

Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon [e];
And yet more med'cinal is it than that moly [f],
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave:
He call'd it hæmony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew, blast, or damp,
Or ghastly furies' apparition [g].
I pursed it up [h], but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compell'd:
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter though disguised,
Enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off: if you have this about you [i]
(As I will give you when we go), you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood,
And brandish'd blade, rush on him [j]; break his glass,

[e] *Clouted shoon.*

See "Cymbeline," a. iv. s. 2:—

> I thought he slept, and put
> My clouted brogues from off my feet, whose rudeness
> Answer'd my steps too loud.

Clouts are thin and narrow plates of iron affixed with hobnails to the soles of the shoes of rustics. These made too much noise. The word "brogues" is still used for shoes among the peasantry of Ireland.—T. WARTON.

The expression occurs in the present version of our Bible, Joshua ix. 5.—TODD.

[f] *And yet more med'cinal is it than that moly, &c.*

Drayton introduces a shepherd "his sundry simples sorting," who, among other rare plants, produces moly, "Mus. Elys. Nymph." v. vol. iv. p. 1489:—

> Here is my moly of much fame,
> In magics often used.

It is not agreed whether Milton's hæmony is a real or poetical plant.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Or ghastly furies' apparition.*

Peck supposes, that the furies were never believed to appear, and proposes to read "fairies' apparition:" but Milton means any frightful appearance raised by magic. Among the spectres which surrounded our Saviour in the wilderness, and which the fiend had raised, are furies, 'Par. Reg.' b. iv. 422.—T. WARTON.

[h] *I pursed it up.*

It was customary in families to have herbs in store, not only for medical and culinary, but for superstitious purposes. In some houses rue and rosemary were constantly kept for good luck. Among the plants to which preternatural qualities were ascribed, Perdita in the "Winter's Tale" mentions rue as the herb of grace, and rosemary as the emblem of remembrance, a. iv. s. 3.—T. WARTON.

[i] *If you have this about you, &c.*

The notion of facing danger, and conquering an enemy by carrying a charm, which was often an herb, is not uncommon in romance. Hence in 'Samson Agon.' v. 1130, &c., and v. 1149, Milton's idea is immediately and particularly taken from the ritual of the combat in chivalry. When two champions entered the lists, each took an oath that he had no charm, herb, or any enchantment about him: and I think it is clear, that Milton, in furnishing the Elder Brother with the plant hæmony, notwithstanding the idea is originally founded in Homer's moly, when like a knight he is to attack the necromancer Comus, and even to assail his hall, alluded to the charming herb of the romantic combat.—T. WARTON.

[j] *And brandish'd blade, rush on him.*

Thus Ulysses assaults Circe, offering her cup, with a drawn sword, Ovid, Met. xiii. 293:—

And shed the luscious liquor on the ground[k].
But seize his wand; though he and his cursed crew[l]
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke[m],
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.
El. Br. Thyrsis, lead on apace; I'll follow thee;
And some good angel bear a shield before us[n]!

The scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music: tables spread with all dainties. Comus appears with his rabble, and the Lady set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.

Com. Nay, Lady, sit; if I but wave this wand,

Intrat
Ille domum Circes, et, ad insidiosa vocatus
Pocula, conantem virga mulcere capillos
Reppulit, et stricto pavidam deterruit ense.

See Homer, Odyss. x. 294, 321.—T. Warton.

Our romances supply us with numerous instances of sorcerers and wizards being vanquished and foiled by the daring hardihood of heroes and warriors. In the poetic ballad of Tamlane a young nobleman is stolen by the fairies, and brought up as a page to their queen, at whose bridle rein he is represented as constantly riding. In one of his excursions he contrived to make his mistress acquainted with his situation, and gave her instructions how to win him back. The adventure required courage, but not more than the lady possessed: she waylaid the fairy procession, seized her lover, and held him fast, though he became successively fire, water, red-hot iron, and a roaring lion in her hands. When all the fairy wiles were exhausted, he was restored to his natural shape, and the gratified damsel held in her arms

A mother-naked man.

A young man, the only son of a clergyman on the Border, suddenly disappeared within these forty years, and the rumour ran that he was seized as he passed one of the mountain streams, and carried off by the fairies. It is said that he appeared afterwards to his only sister, told her he was the fairy queen's paramour, that he would ride on next Hallowmass-eve through a neighbouring glen, and entreated her to waylay and win him, as Janet won young Tamlane. She promised; but when the fairy procession approached, she was so daunted by the wild music and the elfin chivalry, that she made but a weak attempt, and her brother was hurried off weeping to Elfland amid the laughter of his companions.—C.

[k] *Break his glass,*
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground.

Our author has here a double imitation of Spenser's "Faerie Queene," which has not been observed or distinguished. The obvious one is from Sir Guyon spilling the bowl of Pleasure's porter, II. xii. 49: but he also copies Spenser, and more closely, where Sir Guyon breaks the golden cup of the enchantress Excesse, II. xii. 57.—T. Warton.

[l] *He and his cursed crew.*

This is an allusion to Alcina's monsters, "a brutish cursed crew," Harrington's "Orlando Furioso," b. vi. st. 61.—Todd.

[m] *Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke.*

Alluding to Cacus. Virgil, Æn. viii. 252:—

Faucibus ingentem fumum, mirabile dictu,
Evomit.—Todd.

[n] *And some good angel bear a shield before us!*

From the divinities of the classics and of romance, we are now got to the theology of Thomas Aquinas. Our author has nobly dilated this idea of a guardian-angel, yet not without some particular and express warrant from Scripture, which he has also poetically heightened, in 'Samson Agonistes,' v. 1431, &c.—T. Warton.

Had not Milton here also Tasso in mind? See "Gier. Lib." c. vii. 72, viii. 84.—Dunster.

Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster[o],
And you a statue, or, as Daphne was[p],
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.
Lad. Fool, do not boast;
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind[q]
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou has immanacled, while Heaven sees good.
Com. Why are you vex'd, Lady? Why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far: see, here be all the pleasures,
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts[r],
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.
And first, behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mix'd:
Not that Nepenthes[s], which the wife of Thone

[o] *Nay, Lady, sit; if I but wave this wand,*
Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster.

It is with the same magic, and in the same mode, that Prospero threatens Ferdinand, in the "Tempest," for pretending to resist, a. i. s. 2:—

Come from thy ward!
For I can here disarm thee with this stick.—
Come on, obey.——Else,
Thy nerves are in their infancy again,
And have no vigour in them.

Milton here comments upon Shakspeare.—T. WARTON.

[p] *Or, as Daphne was, &c.*

The poet, instead of saying "root-bound, as Daphne was that fled Apollo," throws in "root-bound" into the middle betwixt the antecedent and the relative; a trajection altogether unusual in our language, but which must be allowed both to vary and raise the style; and, as the connection is not so remote as to make the language obscure, I think it may not only be tolerated, but praised. This way of varying the style is a figure very usual both in Greek and Latin.—LORD MONBODDO.

[q] *Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind, &c.*

A fine philosophical sentiment. Compare Cicero, "De Fin." lib. iii. ad fin.:—"Recte invictus, cujus etiam si corpus constringatur, animo tamen vincula injici nulla possunt."—TODD.

[r] *Here be all the pleasures,*
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts.

An echo to Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," a. i. s. 1:—

Here be woods as green
As any, &c.
Here be all new delights, &c.—T. WARTON.

This is a thought of Shakspeare's, but vastly improved by our poet in the manner of expressing it, "Romeo and Juliet," a. i. s. 2:—

Such comfort as do lusty young men feel,
When well-apparel'd April on the heel
Of limping winter treads.—THYER.

[s] *Not that Nepenthes.*

The author of the lively and learned "Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer," has brought together many particulars of this celebrated drug, and concludes, p. 135:—"It is true, they use opiates for pleasure all over the Levant; but by the best accounts of them, they had them originally from Egypt; and this of Helen appears plainly to be a production of that country, and a custom which can be traced from Homer to Augustus's reign, and from thence to the age preceding our own."—JOS. WARTON.

In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which nature lent [t]
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal like an ill-borrower,
With that which you received on other terms;
Scorning the unexempt condition,
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted; but, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.
Lad. 'Twill not, false traitor!
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty,
That thou hast banish'd from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode,
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these [u],
These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me;
Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver [v]!
Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
With visor'd falsehood and base forgery;
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
With lickerish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none,
But such as are good men, can give good things [w];
And that which is not good, is not delicious
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite [x].

[t] *Which nature lent.*

So Shakspeare, Sonnet iv.:—

Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend;
And, being frank, she lends to those are free.
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess given thee to give?—STEEVENS.

[u] *What grim aspects are these.*

So Drayton, "Polyolb." s. xxvii. vol. iii. p. 1190:—

Her grim aspect to see.

And Spenser, "Faer. Qu." v. ix. 48:—

——with griesly grim aspect
Abhorred Murder.—T. WARTON.

[v] *Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver!*

Magical potions, brewed or compounded of incantatory herbs and poisonous drugs. Shakspeare's caldron is a "brewed enchantment," but of another kind.—T. WARTON.

[w] *None,*
But such as are good men, can give good things.

This noble sentiment Milton has borrowed from Euripides, "Medea," v. 618.—NEWTON.

[x] *And that which is not good, is not delicious*
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.

That is, an appetite in subjection to the rational part, and which is pleased with

Com. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoick fur [y],
And fetch their precepts from the cynick tub,
Praising the lean and sallow abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutch'd [z] the all-worshipp'd ore, and precious gems,
To store her children with: if all the world
Should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
The All-giver would be unthank'd, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised:
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth;
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons [a],
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility;
The earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air dark'd with plumes [b],
The herds [c] would over-multitude their lords,

nothing but what reason approves of; it is a noble sentiment, but expressed in a manner which will appear flat and insipid to those who admire the present fashionable style, far removed from the simplicity of the ancients. Milton was not only the greatest scholar and finest writer of his age, but a good philosopher.—LORD MONBODDO.

[y] *To those budge doctors of the Stoick fur.*

Those morose and rigid teachers of abstinence and mortification, who wear the gown of the Stoic philosophy. "Budge" is fur, anciently an ornament of the scholastic habit. In the more ancient colleges of our universities, the annual expenses for furring the robes or liveries of the fellows appear to have been very considerable. "The Stoick fur," is as much as if he had said "The Stoick sect." But he explains the obsolete word, in which there is a tincture of ridicule, by a very awkward tautology.—T. WARTON.

[z] *She hutch'd.*

That is, hoarded. "Hutch" is an old word, still in use, for coffer.—T. WARTON.

[a] *And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons.*

The expression is taken from Heb. xii. 8:—"Then are ye bastards, and not sons."—NEWTON.

[b] *The wing'd air dark'd with plumes.*

The image is taken from what the ancients said of the air of the northern islands, that it was clogged and darkened with feathers.—WARBURTON.

[c] *The herds, &c.*

Mr. Bowle observes, that the tenor of Comus's argument is much the same with that of Clarinda, in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Sea-Voyage," a. ii. s. 1.—

Should all women use this obstinate abstinence,
You would force upon us;
In a few years the whole world would be peopled
Only with beasts.—T. WARTON.

The sea o'erfraught would swell[d], and the unsought diamonds
Would so imblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars[e], that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cosen'd
With that same vaunted name, virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself:
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose,
It withers on the stalk with languish'd head[f].
Beauty is Nature's brag[g], and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship:
It is for homely features to keep home[h],
They had their name thence; coarse complexions,
And cheeks of sorry grain, will serve to ply
The sampler, and to teaze the huswife's wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes[i], or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised: you are but young yet[j].

[d] *The sea o'erfraught would swell, &c.*

Dr. Warburton and Dr. Newton remark, that this and the four following lines are exceedingly childish. Perhaps they are not inconsistent with the character of the wily speaker; and might be intended to expose that ostentatious sophistry, by which a bad cause is generally supported.—TODD.

[e] *And so bestud with stars.*

So Drayton, in his most elegant epistle from King John to Matilda, which our author, as we shall see, has more largely copied in the remainder of Comus's speech, vol. i. p. 232, of heaven:—

Would she put on her star-bestudded crown.—T. WARTON.

[f] *If you let slip time, like a neglected rose,*
It withers on the stalk with languish'd head.

See "Midsummer Night's Dream," a. i. s. 1:—

But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that, which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown*
In courts, &c.

See Fletcher's "Faith. Shep." a. i. s. 1:—"Give not yourself to loneness," &c. But this argument is pursued more at large in Drayton's Epistle above quoted.—T. WARTON.

[h] *It is for homely features to keep home.*

The same turn and manner of expression is in the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," at the beginning:—

Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.—NEWTON.

[i] *Love-darting eyes.*

So in Sylvester's "Du Bart." ed. fol. p. 399:—

Whoso beholds her sweet love-darting eyn.—T. WARTON.

[j] *You are but young yet.*

This was too personal. Lady Alice Egerton, who acted the part, was about twelve:

Lad. I had not thought to have unlock'd my lips
In this unhallow'd air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules prank'd in reason's garb.
I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments [k],
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance; she, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare temperance [l]:
If every just man, that now pines with want,
Had but a moderate and beseeming share [m]
Of that which lewdly-pamper'd luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumber'd with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thank'd,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on,
Or have I said enow? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity,
Fain would I something say;—yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul [n], to apprehend
The sublime notion, and high mystery [o],

she here sustained a feigned character which the poet overlooked. He too plainly adverts to her age. Particularities, where no compliment was implied, should have been avoided.—T. WARTON.

[k] *I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments.*

In the construction of a mill, a part of the machine is called the boulting-mill, which separates the flour from the bran. The meaning of the whole context is this, "I am offended when Vice pretends to dispute and reason, for it always uses sophistry."—T. WARTON.

[l] *Spare temperance.*

'Il. Pens.' v. 46:—

Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet.—T. WARTON.

[m] *A moderate and beseeming share.*

So, in his 'Prose Works,' i. 161, ed. 1698:—"We cannot therefore do better than to leave this care of ours to God: he can easily send labourers into his harvest, that shall not cry, Give, give, but be contented with a moderate and beseeming allowance."—TODD.

[n] *Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, &c.*

See before, v. 453, &c. By studying the reveries of the Platonic writers, Milton contracted a theory concerning chastity and the purity of love, in the contemplation of which, like other visionaries, he indulged his imagination with ideal refinements, and with pleasing but unmeaning notions of excellence and perfection.—T. WARTON.

[o] *The sublime notion, and high mystery, &c.*

Thus, in his 'Smectymnuus,' speaking of chastity:—"Having had the doctrine

That must be utter'd to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetorick [p],
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence [q];
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced:
Yet should I try, the uncontrouled worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my wrapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
That dumb things would be moved to sympathise,
And the brute earth would lend her nerves [r], and shake,
Till all thy magick structures rear'd so high,
Were shatter'd [s] into heaps o'er thy false head.
Com. She fables not; I feel that I do fear [t]
Her words set off by some superiour power;
And though not mortal [u], yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus,
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly. Come, no more:
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon-laws of our foundation [v]:

of Holy Scripture, unfolding those chaste and high mysteries, with timeliest care infused, that the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."—TODD.

[p] *Gay rhetorick.*

See Beaumont and Fletcher's "Philaster," a. iv. s. 1:—"I know not your rhetorick; but I can lay it on."—T. WARTON.

[q] *Her dazzling fence.*

We have the substantive "fence" in Shakspeare, "Much Ado about Nothing," a. v. s. 1:—"Despight his nice fence," &c.—T. WARTON.

[r] *And the brute earth would lend her nerves.*

The unfeeling Earth would sympathise and assist. It is Horace's "bruta tellus," Od. i. xxxiv. 9. —T. WARTON.

[s] *Were shatter'd, &c.*

In G. Fletcher's "Christ's Vict." the sorceresse sings a song, the subject of which is, Love "obtruding false rules prank'd in reason's garb," and endeavours to captivate our Saviour in the same manner as Comus does the Lady.—HEADLEY.

[t] These six lines are aside, but I would point the first thus: "She fables not, I feel that;" that is, I feel that she does not fable, &c.—SYMPSON.

[u] *And though not mortal, &c.*

Her words are assisted by somewhat divine; and I, although immortal, and above the race of man, am so affected with their force, that a cold shuddering dew, &c. Here is the noblest panegyric on the power of virtue, adorned with the sublimest imagery. It is extorted from the mouth of a magician and a preternatural being, who, although actually possessed of his prey, feels all the terrors of human nature at the bold rebuke of innocence, and shudders with a sudden cold sweat like a guilty man.—T. WARTON.

[v] *Against the canon-laws of our foundation.*

"Canon-laws," a joke!—WARBURTON.

Here is a ridicule on establishments, and the canon-law, now greatly encouraged by the church. Perhaps on the canons of the church, now rigidly enforced, and at which Milton frequently glances in his prose tracts.—T. WARTON.

I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees[w]
And settlings of a melancholy blood:
But this will cure all straight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight,
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.

[The *Brothers* rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground; his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The *Attendant Spirit* comes in.]

Spir. What, have you let the false enchanter 'scape?
O, ye mistook; ye should have snatch'd his wand[x],
And bound him fast: without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the lady that sits here
In stony fetters fix'd, and motionless:
Yet stay; be not disturb'd; now I bethink me,
Some other means[y] I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learn'd,
The soothest[z] shepherd that e'er piped on plains[a].

[w] *Yet 'tis but the lees.*

I like the manuscript reading best,—

This is mere moral stuff, the very lees.

"Yet" is bad: "But," very inaccurate.—HURD.
"Yet" is omitted both by Tickell and Fenton.—TODD.

[x] *O, ye mistook; ye should have snatch'd his wand, &c.*

They are directed before to seize Comus's wand, v. 653: and this was from the "Faerie Queene," where Sir Guyon breaks the charming staff of Pleasure's porter, as he likewise overthrows his bowl, II. xii. 49. But from what particular process of disenchantment, ancient or modern, did Milton take the notion of reversing Comus's wand or rod? It was from a passage of Ovid, the great ritualist of classical sorcery, before cited, where the companions of Ulysses are restored to their human shapes, "Metam." xiv. 300:

Percutimurque caput conversæ verbere virgæ,
Verbaque dicuntur dictis contraria verbis.

The circumstance in the text, of the Brothers forgetting to seize and reverse the magician's rod, while by contrast it heightens the superior intelligence of the Attendant Spirit, affords the opportunity of introducing the fiction of raising Sabrina; which, exclusive of its poetical ornaments, is recommended by a local propriety, and was peculiarly interesting to the audience, as the Severn is the famous river of the neighbourhood.—T. WARTON.

[y] *Some other means, &c.*

Dr. Johnson reprobates this "long narration," as he styles it, about Sabrina; which, he says, "is of no use because it is false, and therefore unsuitable to a good being." By the poetical reader this fiction is considered as true. In common sense, the relator is not true: and why may not an imaginary being, even of a good character, deliver an imaginary tale? Where is the moral impropriety of an innocent invention, especially when introduced for a virtuous purpose? In poetry false narrations are often more useful than true. Something, and something preternatural, and consequently false, but therefore more poetical, was necessary for the present distress.—T. WARTON.

[z] *The soothest.*

The truest, faithfullest. "Sooth" is truth; "in sooth" is indeed: and therefore what this soothest shepherd teaches may be depended upon.—NEWTON.

[a] *That e'er piped on plains.*

Spenser thus characterises Hobbinol, as Mr. Bowle observes, in "Colin Clout's come Home again:"—

A iolly groome was hee,
As euer piped on an oaten reed.—T. WARTON.

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence[b],
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,
Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
The guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged stepdame Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
That staid her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom play'd,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;
Who, piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe[c]
In nectar'd lavers[d], strew'd with asphodel;
And through the porch[e] and inlet of each sense
Dropp'd in ambrosial oils, till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change[f],
Made goddess of the river: still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows[g],
Helping all urchin blasts[h], and ill-luck signs

[b] *There is a gentle nymph not far from hence, &c.*

The part of the fable of 'Comus,' which may be called the disenchantment, is evidently founded on Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess." The moral of both dramas is the triumph of chastity. This in both is finely brought about by the same sort of machinery.—T. WARTON.

[c] *Imbathe.*

The word "imbathe" occurs in our author's 'Reformation:'—"Methinks a sovran and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears; and the sweet odour of the returning gospel imbathe his soul with the fragrance of Heaven." What was enthusiasm in most of the puritanical writers, was poetry in Milton.—T. WARTON.

[d] *In nectar'd lavers.*

This, at least, reminds us of Alcæus's epigram or epitaph on Homer, who died in the island of Io. The Nereids of the circumambient sea bathed his dead body with nectar. The process which follows, of dropping ambrosial oils "into the porch and inlet of each sense" of the drowned Sabrina, is originally from Homer, where Venus anoints the dead body of Patroclus with rosy ambrosial oil. Il. xxiii. 186.—T. WARTON.

[e] *And through the porch.*

The same metaphor in "Hamlet," a. i. s. 8:—

> And in the porches of mine ear did pour
> The leperous distilment.—NEWTON.

[f] *And underwent a quick immortal change.*

So in the "Tempest," a. i. s. 2:—

> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change.—STEEVENS.

[g] *Visits the herds along the twilight meadows, &c.*

The virgin shepherdess Clorin, in Fletcher's pastoral play, so frequently quoted, possesses the skill of Sabrina, a. i. s. 1.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Helping all urchin blasts.*

The urchin, or hedge-hog, from its solitariness, the ugliness of its appearance, and from a popular opinion that it sucked or poisoned the udders of cows, was adopted into the demonologic system; and its shape was sometimes supposed to be assumed by mischievous elves. Hence it was one of the plagues of Caliban in the "Tempest," a. ii. s. 2:—

That the shrewd meddling elfe delights to make,
Which she with precious vial'd liquors heals:
For which the shepherds at their festivals
Carol her goodness loud in rustick lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream[i]
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils:
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numming spell[j],
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself[k],
In hard-besetting need; this will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

SONG.

Sabrina fair,
  Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
  In twisted braids of lilies[l] knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair[m]:
  Listen for dear honour's sake,
  Goddess of the silver lake;
    Listen, and save!

His spirits hear me,
And yet I needs must curse: but they'll not pinch,
Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me in the mire, &c.—T. WARTON.

[i] *And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream.*

Beaumont and Fletcher exhibit a passage immediately to the purport of the text, "False One," a. iii. s. 3:—

With incense let us bless the brim;
And as the wanton fishes swim,
Let us gums and garlands fling, &c.—T. WARTON.

[j] *She can unlock*
The clasping charm, and thaw the numming spell.

This notion of the wisdom or skill of Sabrina, is in Drayton, "Polyolb." s. v. vol. ii. p. 753.—T. WARTON.

[k] *To aid a virgin, such as was herself.*

Alluding perhaps to the Danaids' invocation of Pallas, wherein they use the same argument, Æschyl. "Supp." v. 155.—THYER.

[l] *In twisted braids of lilies.*

We are to understand water-lilies, with which Drayton often braids the tresses of his water-nymphs, in the "Polyolbion."—T. WARTON.

[m] *The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair.*

We have "an amber cloud" above, v. 333. And, in 'L'Allegro,' "the sun is robed in flames and amber light," v. 61. But liquid amber is a yellow pellucid gum. Sabrina's hair drops amber, because, in the poet's idea, her stream was supposed to be transparent; as the river of bliss in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iii. 358; and Choaspes has an "amber stream," 'Paradise Regained,' b. iii. 288. But Choaspes was called the "golden water." Amber, when applied to water, means a luminous clearness; when to hair, bright yellow.—T. WARTON.

A curious passage in Nash's "Terrors of the Night," 1594, will minutely illustrate the "amber-dropping hair" of Sabrina: Nash is describing a "troupe of naked virgins. Their hair they ware loose unrowled about their shoulders, whose dangling amber trammels, reaching downe beneath their knees, seemed to drop baulme on their delicious bodies."—TODD.

Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus [n];
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace [o],
And Tethys' grave majestick pace;
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook;
By scaly Triton's winding shell [p],
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis' tinsel-slipper'd feet [q],
And the songs of sirens sweet [r];
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb [s],

[n] *In name of great Oceanus.*

It will be curious to observe how the poet has distinguished the sea-deities by the epithets and attributes which are assigned to each of them in the best classic authors; "Great Oceanus," as in Hesiod, "Theog." 20: Ὠκεανόν τε μέγαν.—NEWTON.

[o] *By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace, &c.*

Neptune is usually called "earth-shaking," in Il. xii. 27, xx. 13. Tethys the wife of Oceanus, and mother of the gods, may well be supposed to have "a grave majestick pace:" Hesiod calls her "the venerable Tethys," Theog. 368. Milton had before called Nereus, at v. 835, 'aged," as in Virgil, Georg. iv. 392, "grandævus Nereus:" he may be called "hoary" too upon another account:—"Fere omnes Dii marini senes sunt, albent enim eorum capita spumis aquarum." Servius, in Georg. iv. 403:—"The Carpathian wizard" is Proteus, who had a cave at Carpathus, an island in the Mediterranean, and was a wizard or prophet, as also Neptune's shepherd; and as such bore a hook. See Virgil, Georg. iv. 387.—NEWTON.

And Ovid, Met. xi. 249:—"Carpathius vates."—TODD.

[p] *Triton's winding shell, &c.*

Triton was Neptune's trumpeter, and was "scaly," as all these sorts of creatures are: "squamis modo hispido corpore, etiam qua humanam effigiem habent." Plin. lib. ix. sect. iv. His "winding shell" is particularly described in Ovid, Met. i. 333. Glaucus was an excellent fisher or diver, and so was feigned to be a sea-god. Aristotle writes that he prophesied to the gods, and Nicandor says that Apollo himself learnt the art of prediction from Glaucus. See "Athenæus," lib. vii. cap. 12. And Euripides, "Orest." 363, calls him the seaman's prophet, and interpreter of Nereus; and Apollon. Rhodius, "Argonaut." 1310, gives him the same appellation. Ino, flying from the rage of her husband Athamas, who was furiously mad, threw herself from the top of a rock into the sea, with her son Melicerta in her arms. Neptune, at the intercession of Venus, changed them into sea-deities, and gave them new names; Leucothea to her, and to him Palæmon. See Ovid, Met. iv. 538. She, being Leucothea, or the white goddess, may well be supposed to have "lovely hands," which I presume the poet mentions in opposition to Thetis' feet: and her son "rules the strands," having the command of the ports, and therefore called in Latin *Portumnus*. See Ovid, Fast. vi. 545.—NEWTON.

[q] *Tinsel-slipper'd feet.*

The poet meant this as a paraphrase of "silver-footed," the usual epithet of Thetis in Homer.—NEWTON.

[r] *Sirens sweet, &c.*

The sirens are introduced here, as being sea-nymphs, and singing upon the coast.—NEWTON.

[s] Parthenope and Ligea were two of the sirens. Parthenope's tomb was at Naples, which was therefore called Parthenope. Plin. lib. iii. sect. ix. Silius Ital. xii. 33. Ligea is also the name of a sea-nymph in Virgil, Georg. iv. 336; and the poet draws her in the attitude in which mermaids are represented. See Ovid, Met. iv. 310, of Salmacis.—NEWTON.

One of the employments of the nymph Salmacis in Ovid, is to comb her hair; but

Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head,
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answer'd have.
Listen, and save[t]!

[SABRINA rises, attended by Water Nymphs, and sings.]

By the rushy-fringed bank[u],
Where grows the willow, and the osier dank[v],
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate[w], and the azure sheen[x]
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays;
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet[y]
O'er the cowslip's velvet head[z],
That bends not as I tread[a]:

that fiction is here heightened with the brilliancy of romance. Ligea's comb is of gold, and she sits on diamond rocks. These were new allurements for the unwary.—T. WARTON.

[t] *Listen, and save!*

The repetition of the prayer, ver. 866 and 889, in the invocation of Sabrina, is similar to that of Æschylus's Chorus in the invocation of Darius's shade, "Persæ," ver. 666 and 674.—THYER.

Thus Amaryllis, in the "Faithful Shepherdess," invokes the priest of Pan to protect her from the sullen shepherd, a. v. s. 1, p. 184.—T. WARTON.

[u] *By the rushy-fringed bank.*

See 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 262:—"The fringed bank with myrtle crown'd."—T. WARTON.

[v] *Where grows the willow, and the osier dank.*

See the "Faithful Shepherdess," a. iii. s. 1, p. 153.—T. WARTON.

[w] *My sliding chariot stays,*
Thick set with agate, &c.

See Drayton, "Polyolb." s. v. vol. ii. p. 752.—T. WARTON.

[x] *The azure sheen.*

"Sheen" is again used as a substantive for brightness, in this poem, ver. 1003.—TODD.

[y] *Printless feet.*

So Prospero to his elves, but in a style of much higher and wilder fiction, "Temp." a. v. s. 1:—

And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
When he comes back.—T. WARTON.

[z] *Velvet head.*

In the "Faithful Shepherdess," a. ii. s. 1:—"The dew-drops hang on the velvet-heads" of flowers.—TODD.

[a] *That bends not as I tread.*

See "England's Helicon," ed. 1614, by W. H.:—

Where she doth walke,
Scarce she doth the primerose head
Depresse, or tender stalke
Of blew-vein'd violets,
Whereon her foot she sets.—T. WARTON.

Gentle swain, at thy request,
I am here.
Spir. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmed band
Of true virgin here distress'd,
Through the force, and through the wile,
Of unbless'd enchanter vile.
Sab. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnared chastity:
Brightest Lady, look on me [b].
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops, that from my fountain pure
I have kept, of precious cure [c];
Thrice upon thy finger's tip [d],
Thrice upon thy rubied lip [e]:
Next this marble venom'd seat,
Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold:—
Now the spell hath lost his hold [f];
And I must haste, ere morning hour,
To wait in Amphitrite's bower [g].

[SABRINA descends, and the *Lady* rises out of her seat.]

Spir. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line [h],

[b] *Brightest Lady, look on me.*

In the manuscript, *virtuous:* but "brightest" is an epithet thus applied in the "Faithful Shepherdess."—T. WARTON.

[c] *Drops, that from my fountain pure*
I have kept, of precious cure.

Calton proposed to read *ure*, that is, use. The word, it must be owned, was not uncommon: but the rhymes of many couplets in the "Faithful Shepherdess," relating to the same business, and ending "pure" and "cure," show that *cure* was Milton's word.—T. WARTON.

[d] *Thrice upon thy finger's tip, &c.*

Compare Shakspeare, "Mids. Night's Dream," a. ii. s. 6. But Milton, in most of the circumstances of dissolving this charm, is apparently to be traced in the "Faithful Shepherdess"—T. WARTON.

[e] *Thy rubied lip.*

So in Browne's "Brit. Past." b. ii. s. iii. p. 78:—

The melting rubyes on her cherry lip.—TODD.

[f] *I touch with chaste palms moist and cold:—*
Now the spell hath lost his hold.

Compare Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," a. v. s. 1; a. iii. s. 1.—T. WARTON.

The chaste hands also of Britomart, the flower of chastity, "Faer. Q." III. xi. 6, were not here forgotten by Milton.—TODD.

[g] *To wait in Amphitrite's bower.*

Drayton's Sabrina is arrayed in

A watchet weed, with many a curious wave,
Which as a princely gift great Amphitrite gave.

"Polyolb." s. v. vol. ii. p. 752. And we have "Amphitrite's bower," ibid. s. xxviii. v. iii. p. 1193.—T. WARTON.

May thy brimmed waves for this
Their full tribute never miss [i]
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth, or singed air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore [j];
May thy lofty head be crown'd [k]
With many a tower [l] and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon [m]!
  Come, Lady, while heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.

[h] *Sprung of old Anchises' line.*

For Locrine was the son of Brutus, who was the son of Silvius, Silvius of Ascanius, Ascanius of Æneas, Æneas of Anchises. See Milton's 'History of England,' b. i.—NEWTON.

[i] *Their full tribute never miss, &c.*

The torrents from the Welsh mountains sometimes raise the Severn on a sudden to a prodigious height: but at the same time they "fill her molten crystal with mud:" her stream, which of itself is clear, is then discoloured and muddy. The poet adverts to the known natural properties of the river.—T. WARTON.

[j] *May thy billows roll ashore*
The beryl and the golden ore.

This is reasonable as a wish; but jewels were surely out of place among the decorations of Sabrina's chariot, on the supposition that they were the natural productions of her stream. The wish is equally ideal and imaginary, that her banks should be covered with groves of myrrh and cinnamon. A wish conformable to the real state of things, to English seasons and English fertility, would have been more pleasing, as less unnatural: yet we must not too severely try poetry by truth and reality.—T. WARTON.

[k] *May thy lofty head be crown'd, &c.*

This votive address of gratitude to Sabrina was suggested to our author by that of Amoret to the river-god in Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," a. iii. s. 1.—T. WARTON.

[l] *With many a tower, &c.*

Mr. Warton thinks that Windsor Castle suggested this description. Milton was thinking rather of Spenser.—TODD.

[m] *And here and there thy banks upon*
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

The construction of these two lines is a little difficult: to crown her head with towers is true imagery; but to crown her head upon her banks will scarcely be allowed to be so. I would therefore put a colon instead of a comma at v. 935, and then read

And here and there thy banks upon
Be groves of myrrh and cinnamon.—SEWARD.

In v. 936, "banks" is the nominative case, as "head" was in the last verse but one. The sense and syntax of the whole is, May thy head be crown'd round about with towers and terraces, and here and there may thy banks be crowned upon with groves, &c. The phrase is Greek.—CALTON.

Not a waste or needless sound,
Till we come to holier ground;
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wish'd presence; and beside
All the swains that there abide,
With jigs and rural dance resort:
We shall catch them at their sport;
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and chere.
Come, let us haste; the stars grow high;
But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky [n].

[The scene changes, presenting Ludlow town and the President's castle: then come in Country Dancers; after them the *Attendant Spirit*, with the *Two Brothers*, and the *Lady*.]

SONG.

Spir. Back, shepherds, back; enough your play,
Till next sunshine holiday:
Here be, without duck or nod [o],
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise,
With the mincing Dryades,
On the lawns and on the leas.

[This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.]

Noble Lord, and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight;

[n] *The stars grow high:*
But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

Compare Fletcher's play, a. ii. s. 1.—T. Warton.

[o] *Here be, without duck or nod, &c.*

By "ducks and nods" our author alludes to the country people's awkward way of dancing: and, the two Brothers and the Lady being now to dance, he describes their elegant way of moving by "trippings," "lighter toes," "court guise," &c. He follows Shakspeare, who makes Ariel tell Prospero, that his maskers,

Before you can say, come and go,
And breathe twice, and cry so, so,
Each one, tripping on his toe,
Will be here with mop and mow.

And Oberon commands his fairies:—

Every elfe, and fairy sprite,
Hop as light as bird from briar,
And this ditty after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

The Dryads were wood-nymphs: but here the ladies who appeared on this occasion at the court of the lord president of the marches, are very elegantly termed Dryades. Indeed the prophet complains of the Jewish women for mincing as they go, Isaiah iii. 16. But our author uses that word, only to express the neatness of their gait.—Peck.

Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own:
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth;
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

[The Dances ended, the *Spirit* epiloguizes.]

Spir. To the ocean now I fly [p],
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky [q]:
There I suck the liquid air [r]
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three [s]
That sing about the golden tree [t]:
Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Thither all their bounties bring;

[p] *To the ocean now I fly, &c.*

This speech is evidently a parphrase on Ariel's song in the "Tempest," a. v. s. 1:—

Where the bee sucks, there suck I.—WARBURTON.

[q] *Up in the broad fields of the sky.*

It may be doubted whether from Virgil, "Aeris in campis latis," Æn. vi. 888, for at first he had written "plain fields," with another idea; a level extent of verdure.—T. WARTON.

He wrote "broad fields" from Fairfax, b. viii. st. 57:—"O'er the broad fields of heauen's bright wildernesse."—TODD.

[r] *There I suck the liquid air.*

Thus Ubaldo, in Fairfax's "Tasso," a good wisard, who dwells in the centre of the earth, but sometimes emerges, to breathe the purer air of Mount Carmel, b. xiv. st. 43:—

And there in liquid ayre myself disport.—T. WARTON.

[s] *All amidst the gardens fair*
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three.

The daughters of Hesperus, the brother of Atlas, first mentioned in Milton's manuscript as their father, had gardens or orchards which produced apples of gold. Spenser makes them the daughters of Atlas, "Faery Qu." II. vii. 54. See Ovid, "Metam." ix. 636: and Apollodor. "Bibl." l. ii. § 11. But what ancient fabler celebrates these damsels for their skill in singing? Apollonius Rhodius, an author whom Milton taught to his scholars, "Argon." iv. 1396. Hence Lucan's virgin-choir, overlooked by the commentators, is to be explained, where he speaks of this golden grove, ix. 360:—

fuit aurea silva,
Divitiisque graves et fulvo germine rami;
Virgineusque chorus, nitidi custodia luci,
Et nunquam somno damnatus lumina serpens, &c.

Milton frequently alludes to these ladies, or their gardens, 'Par. Lost,' b. iii. 568, iv. 250, viii. 631, 'Par. Reg.' b. ii. 357. And the Mask before us, v. 392.—T. WARTON.

[t] *The golden tree.*

Many say that the apples of Atlas's garden were of gold: Ovid is the only ancient writer that says the trees were of gold, "Metam." iv. 636.—T. WARTON.

There eternal summer dwells,
And west winds, with musky wing,
About the cedar'd alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow [u]
Flowers of more mingled hew
Than her purfled scarf can shew;
And drenches with Elysian dew [v]
(List, mortals, if your ears be true [w])
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground [x]
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen [y]:
But far above in spangled sheen [z]
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced,
Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranced,
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy [a]; so Jove hath sworn.
  But now my task is smoothly done [b],
I can fly, or I can run,

[u] "Blow" is here actively used, as in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Lover's Progress," a. ii. s. 1:—

The wind that blows the April-flowers not softer.

That is, "makes the flowers blow." So, in Jonson's "Mask at Highgate," 1604:—

For these, Favonius here shall blow
New flowers, &c.—T. WARTON.

[v] *And drenches with Elysian dew.*

As in 'Par. Lost,' b. xi. 367, the angel says to Adam:—

Let Eve, for I have drench'd her eyes,
Here sleep below.—T. WARTON.

[w] *If your ears be true.*

Intimating that this song, which follows, of Adonis, and Cupid and Psyche, is not for the profane, but only for well-purged ears.—HURD.

[x] See Spenser's "Astrophel," st. 48.—T. WARTON.

[y] *The Assyrian queen.*

Venus is called "the Assyrian queen," because she was first worshipped by the Assyrians. See Pausanias, "Attic." lib. i. cap. 14.—NEWTON.

[z] *In spangled sheen.*

"Mids. N. Dream," a. ii. s. 1:—

By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen.—TODD.

[a] Undoubtedly Milton's allusion at large, is here to Spenser's allegorical garden of Adonis, "Faer. Qu." III. vi. 46, seq., but at the same time, his mythology has a reference to Spenser's "Hymne of Love," where Love is feign'd to dwell "in a paradise of all delight," with Hebe, or Youth, and the rest of the darlings of Venus, who sport with his daughter Pleasure.—T. WARTON.

[b] *But now my task is smoothly done, &c.*

So Shakspeare's Prospero, in the Epilogue to the "Tempest:"—

Quickly to the green earth's end [c],
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend [d];
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon [e].
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free:
She can teach ye how to clime [f]
Higher than the sphery chime [g];
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her [h].

Now my charms are all o'erthrown, &c.

And thus the satyr, in Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," who bears the character of our Attendant Spirit, when his office or commission is finished, displays his power and activity, promising any farther services, s. ult.—T. WARTON.

[c] *The green earth's end.*

Cape de Verd isles. —SYMPSON.

[d] *Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend.*

A curve which bends or descends slowly, from its great sweep. "Bending" has the same sense, of Dover cliff, in "K. Lear," a. iv. s. 1:—

There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully on the confined deep.

And, in the "Faithful Shepherdess," "bending plain," p. 105. Jonson has "bending vale," vii. 39.—T. WARTON.

[e] *And from thence can soar as soon*
To the corners of the moon.

Oberon says of the swiftness of his fairies, "Mids. N. Dr." a. iv. s. 1 —

We the globe can compass soon
Swifter than the wandering moon

And Puck's fairy, ibid. a. ii. s. 1:—

I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moone's sphere.—T. WARTON.

[f] *She can teach ye how to clime, &c.*

Dr. Warburton has observed, that the last four verses furnished Pope with the thought for the conclusion of his "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day." A prior imitation may be traced in the close of Dryden's Ode.—TODD.

[g] *The sphery chime.*

"Chime," Ital. *Cima.* Yet he uses "chime" in the common sense, 'Ode Nativ.' v. 128. He may do so here, but then the expression is licentious, I suppose for the sake of the rhyme.—HURD.

The "sphery chime" is the music of the spheres.—T. WARTON.

[h] The moral of this poem is very finely summed up in the six concluding lines: the thought contained in the last two might probably be suggested to our author by a passage in the "Table of Cebes," where Patience and Perseverance are represented stooping and stretching out their hands to help up those who are endeavouring to climb the craggy hill of Virtue, and yet are too feeble to ascend of themselves.—THYER.

Had this learned and ingenious critic duly reflected on the lofty mind of Milton, "smit with the love of sacred song," and so often and so sublimely employed on topics of religion, he might readily have found a subject, to which the poet obviously and divinely alludes in these concluding lines, without fetching the thought from the "Table of Cebes." In the preceding remark, I am convinced Mr. Thyer had no ill intention: but, by overlooking so clear and pointed an allusion to a subject, calculated to kindle that lively glow in the bosom of every Christian, which the poet intended to excite, and by referring it to an image in a profane author, he may, beside stifling the sublime effect so happily produced, afford a handle to some, in these "evil days," who are willing to make the religion of Socrates and Cebes (or that of

Nature) supersede the religion of Christ. "The moral of this poem is, indeed, very finely summed up in the six concluding lines;" in which, to wind up one of the most elegant productions of his genius, "the poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling," threw up its last glance to Heaven, in rapt contemplation of that stupendous mystery, whereby He, the lofty theme of 'Paradise Regained,' stooping from above all height, "bowed the heavens, and came down on earth, to atone as man for the sins of men, to strengthen feeble virtue by the influence of his grace, and to teach her to ascend his throne."—FRANCIS HENRY EGERTON, afterwards Earl of Bridgewater.

The Attendant Spirit opens the poem with a description of the rewards which Virtue promises, "after this mortal life, to her true servants:" the poem, therefore, may be considered more perfect, in closing, as it commenced, with the solemn and impressive sentiments of Scripture.—TODD.

In the peculiar disposition of the story, the sweetness of the numbers, the justness of the expression, and the moral it teaches, there is nothing extant in any language like the 'Mask of Comus.'—TOLAND.

Milton's 'Juvenile Poems' are so no otherwise, than as they were written in his younger years; for their dignity and excellence, they are sufficient to have set him among the most celebrated of the poets, even of the ancients themselves: his 'Mask' and 'Lycidas' are perhaps superior to all in their several kinds.—RICHARDSON.

'Comus' is written very much in imitation of Shakspeare's "Tempest," and the "Faithful Shepherdess" of Fletcher; and though one of the first, is yet one of the most beautiful of Milton's compositions.—NEWTON.

Milton seems in this poem to have imitated Shakspeare's manner more than in any other of his works; and it was very natural for a young author, preparing a piece for the stage, to propose to himself for a pattern the most celebrated master of English dramatic poetry.—THYER.

Milton has here more professedly imitated the manner of Shakspeare in his fairy scenes, than in any other of his works: and his poem is much the better for it, not only for the beauty, variety, and novelty of his images, but for a brighter vein of poetry, and an ease and delicacy of expression very superior to his natural manner.—WARBURTON.

If this Mask had been revised by Milton, when his ear and judgment were perfectly formed, it had been the most exquisite of all his poems. As it is, there are some puerilities in it, and many inaccuracies of expression and versification. The two editions of his poems are of 1645 and 1673. In 1645, he was, as he would think, better employed; in 1673, he would condemn himself for having written such a thing as a Mask, especially for a great lord and a sort of viceroy.—HURD.

The greatest of Milton's juvenile performances is the 'Mask of Comus,' in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of 'Paradise Lost.' Milton appears to have formed very early that system of diction, and mode of verse, which his maturer judgment approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor desired to deviate. Nor does 'Comus' afford only a specimen of his language; it exhibits likewise his power of description and his vigour of sentiment, employed in the praise and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets embellish almost every period with lavish decoration: as a series of lines, therefore, it may be considered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it; as a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable. A Mask, in those parts where supernatural intervention is admitted, must indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination; but, so far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reasonable, which can hardly be said of the conduct of the two Brothers; who, when their sister sinks with fatigue in a pathless wilderness, wander both away together in search of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpless lady to all the sadness and danger of solitude. This, however, is a defect overbalanced by its convenience. What deserves more reprehension is, that the prologue spoken in the wild wood by the Attendant Spirit is addressed to the audience; a mode of communication so contrary to the nature of dramatic representation, that no precedents can support it. The discourse of the Spirit is too long; an objection that may be made to almost all the following speeches: they have not the sprightliness of a dialogue animated by reciprocal contention, but seem rather declamations deliberately composed, and formally repeated, on a moral question: the auditor therefore listens as to a lecture, without passion, without anxiety. The song of

Comus has airiness and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's morals as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleasure are so general, that they excite no distinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy. The following soliloquies of Comus and the Lady are elegant, but tedious. The song must owe much to the voice, if it ever can delight. At last the Brothers enter with too much tranquillity; and when they had feared lest their sister should be in danger, and hoped that she is not in danger, the Elder makes a speech in praise of chastity, and the Younger finds how fine it is to be a philosopher. Then descends the Spirit in form of a shepherd; and the Brother, instead of being in haste to ask his help, praises his singing, and inquires his business in that place. It is remarkable, that at this interview the Brother is taken with a short fit of rhyming. The Spirit relates that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moralises again; and the Spirit makes a long narration, of no use because it is false, and therefore unsuitable to a good being. In all these parts the language is poetical, and the sentiments are generous; but there is something wanting to allure attention. The dispute between the Lady and Comus is the most animated and affecting scene of the drama, and wants nothing but a brisker reciprocation of objections and replies to invite attention and detain it. The songs are vigorous, and full of imagery; but they are harsh in their diction, and not very musical in their numbers. Throughout the whole, the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant, for dialogue: it is a drama in the epic style, inelegantly splendid and tediously instructive.—JOHNSON.

Milton's 'Comus' is, I think, one of the finest productions of modern times; and I do not know whether to admire most the poetry of it, or the philosophy, which is of the noblest kind. The subject of it I like better than that of the 'Paradise Lost,' which I think is not human enough to touch the common feelings of humanity, as poetry ought to do; the divine personages he has introduced are of too high a kind to act any part in poetry, and the scene of the action is, for the greater part, quite out of nature; but the subject of the 'Comus' is a fine mythological tale, marvellous enough, as all poetical subjects should be, but at the same time human. He begins his piece in the manner of Euripides; and the descending Spirit that prologuises, makes the finest and grandest opening of any theatrical piece that I know, ancient or modern. The conduct of the piece is answerable to the beginning, and the versification of it is finely varied by short and long verses, blank and rhyming, and the sweetest songs that ever were composed; nor do I know anything in English poetry comparable to it in this respect, except Dryden's "Ode on St. Cecilia;" which, for the length of the piece, has all the variety of versification that can well be imagined. As to the style of 'Comus,' it is more elevated, I think, than that of any of his writings, and so much above what is written at present, that I am inclined to make the same distinction in the English language, that Homer made of the Greek in his time; and to say that Milton's language is the language of the gods; whereas we of this age speak and write the language of mere mortal men. If the 'Comus' was to be properly represented, with all the decorations which it requires, of machinery, scenery, dress, music, and dancing, it would be the finest exhibition that ever was seen upon any modern stage: but I am afraid, with all these, the principal part would be still wanting; I mean, players that could wield the language of Milton, and pronounce those fine periods of his, by which he has contrived to give his poetry the beauty of the finest prose composition, and without which there can be nothing great or noble in composition of any kind. Or if we could find players who had breath and organs (for these, as well as other things, begin to fail in this generation), and sense and taste enough, properly to pronounce such periods, I doubt it would not be easy to find an audience that could relish them, or perhaps they would not have attention and comprehension sufficient to connect the sense of them; being accustomed to that trim, spruce, short cut of style, which Tacitus, and his modern imitators, French and English, have made fashionable.—LORD MONBODDO.

In poetical and picturesque circumstances, in wildness of fancy and imagery, and in weight of sentiment and moral, how greatly does 'Comus' excel the "Aminta" of Tasso, and the "Pastor Fido" of Guarini! which Milton, from his love of Italian poetry, must frequently have read. 'Comus,' like these two, is a pastoral drama; and I have often wondered it is not mentioned as such.—JOS. WARTON.

We must not read 'Comus' with an eye to the stage, or with the expectation of dramatic propriety. Under this restriction the absurdity of the Spirit speaking to

an audience in a solitary forest at midnight, and the want of reciprocation in the dialogue, are overlooked. 'Comus' is a suite of speeches, not interesting by discrimination of character; not conveying a variety of incidents, nor gradually exciting curiosity; but perpetually attracting attention by sublime sentiment, by fanciful imagery of the richest vein, by an exuberance of picturesque description, poetical allusion, and ornamental expression. While it widely departs from the grotesque anomalies of the mask now in fashion, it does not nearly approach to the natural constitution of a regular play. There is a chastity in the application and conduct of the machinery; and Sabrina is introduced with much address after the Brothers had imprudently suffered the enchantment of Comus to take effect. This is the first time the old English mask was in some degree reduced to the principles and form of a rational composition; yet still it could not but retain some of its arbitrary peculiarities. The poet had here properly no more to do with the pathos of tragedy, than the character of comedy; nor do I know that he was confined to the usual modes of theatrical interlocution. A great critic observes, that the dispute between the Lady and Comus is the most animated and affecting scene of the piece. Perhaps some other scenes, either consisting only of a soliloquy, or of three or four speeches only, have afforded more true pleasure. The same critic thinks, that in all the moral dialogue, although the language is poetical, and the sentiments generous, something is still wanting to "allure attention." But surely, in such passages, sentiments so generous, and language so poetical, are sufficient to rouse all our feelings. For this reason I cannot admit his position, that 'Comus' is a drama "tediously instructive:" and if, as he says, to these ethical discussions "the auditor listens as to a lecture, without passion, without anxiety," yet he listens with elevation and delight. The action is said to be improbable; because the Brothers, when their sister sinks with fatigue in a pathless wilderness, wander both away together in search of berries, too far to find their way back; and leave a helpless lady to all the sadness and danger of solitude. But here is no desertion or neglect of the Lady: the Brothers leave their sister under a spreading pine in the forest, fainting for refreshment: they go to procure berries or some other fruit for her immediate relief; and, with great probability, lose their way in going or returning; to say nothing of the poet's art, in making this very natural and simple accident to be productive of the distress, which forms the future business and complication of the fable. It is certainly a fault that the Brothers, although with some indications of anxiety, should enter with so much tranquillity, when their sister is lost, and at leisure pronounce philosophical panegyrics on the mysteries of virginity: but we must not too scrupulously attend to the exigencies of situation, nor suffer ourselves to suppose that we are reading a play, which Milton did not mean to write. These splendid insertions will please independently of the story, from which however they result; and their elegance and sublimity will overbalance their want of place. In a Greek tragedy, such sentimental harangues, arising from the subject, would have been given to a Chorus. On the whole, whether 'Comus' be or be not deficient as a drama, whether it is considered as an epic drama, a series of lines, a mask, or a poem, I am of opinion, that our author is here only inferior to his own 'Paradise Lost.'—T. WARTON.

Milton's 'Comus' is, in my judgment, the most beautiful and perfect poem of that sublime genius.—WAKEFIELD.

Perhaps the conduct and conversation of the Brothers, which Mr. Warton blames in the preceding note, may not be altogether indefensible. They have lost their way in a forest at night, and are in "want of light and noise:" it would now be dangerous for them to run about an unknown wilderness; and, if they should separate, in order to seek their sister, they might lose each other: in the uncertainty of what was their best plan they therefore naturally wait, expecting to hear perhaps the cry of their lost sister, or some noise to which they would have directed their steps. The Younger Brother anxiously expresses his apprehensions for his sister: the Elder, in reply, trusts that she is not in danger; and, instead of giving way to those fears, which the Younger repeats, expatiates on the strength of chastity; by the illustration of which argument he confidently maintains the hope of their sister's safety, while he beguiles the perplexity of their own situation. It has been observed, that 'Comus' is not calculated to shine in theatric exhibition for those very reasons which constitute its essential and specific merit. The "Pastor Fido" of Guarini, which also ravishes the reader, and "The Faithful Shepherdess" of Fletcher, could not succeed

upon the stage. However, it is sufficient, that 'Comus' displays the true sources of poetical delight and moral instruction, in its charming imagery, in its original conceptions, in its sublime diction, in its virtuous sentiments. Its few inaccuracies weigh but as dust in the balance against its general merit: and, in short, if I may be allowed respectfully to differ from the high authority of a preceding note, I am of opinion, that this enchanting poem, or pastoral drama, is both gracefully splendid, and delightfully instructive.—TODD.

Dr. Johnson is more inclined to be favourable to 'Comus' than to any other poem of Milton: he begins fairly enough, and gives it some of the praises which justly belong to it; but he gradually returns to his captious ill-humour, and ends with saying that it is "inelegantly splendid and tediously instructive." After this close, what is the value of his praise? If it is truly poetical, it cannot be inelegantly splendid! Milton's decorations are never out of place in this Mask: it contains not a single image or epithet which does not fill the reader of taste with delight: it contains no passion, but he did not intend it. Masks were always designed to play with the fancy; and from beginning to end, without the abatement of a single line, Milton has effected this. Such a series of rural and pastoral picturesqueness was never before brought together. It is worthy of remark with what admirable skill the poet gathered from all his predecessors, Spenser, Shakspeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Drayton, and twenty more, every happy adjective of description and imaginative force, and combined them into the texture of his own fiction. As his power of creation was great, so was his memory both exact and abundant; whatever he borrowed, he made new by the fervid power of amalgamation.

The flowing strains of the whole poem are eloquent and beautiful, enriched with philosophic moral learning, and exalted by pure, generous, and lofty sentiment. Thus:—

> Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
> Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
> Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
> And with these raptures moves the vocal air
> To testify his hidden residence!

Again, v. 476:—

> How charming is divine philosophy!
> Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute,
> And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
> Where no crude surfeit reigns.

This poem is stated to have been the congenial prelude to 'Paradise Lost.' In that opinion I do not concur: the fable is too gay; the images are too full of delight: all the topics lie too much upon the surface. There is a rich invention, but it has not the depth, or strength, or sublimity of 'Paradise Lost.' This is playful; that is full of solemnity and awe. More than that, though the combination gives originality to 'Comus,' yet it has nothing like the degree of originality of the great epic; of which a large portion of the invention has no prototype. Nor do I admit that even the language is of the same structure; it is, for the most part, more fluent and soft; it is, in short, pastoral, while the other is heroic.

The sort of spiritual beings, which is introduced into 'Comus,' is of a much more humble degree than those of the latter poems. These invisible inhabitants of the earth gratify the gay freaks of our imagination; they do not excite the profounder movements of the soul, and fill us with a sublime terror, like Satan and his crews of fallen angels.

In the long interval between the composition of the Mask, and of 'Paradise Lost,' the wings of Milton's genius had expanded, and strengthened an hundred-fold: he was no longer a shepherd, of whose enchanting pipe the beautiful echoes resounded through the woods; but a sage, an oracle, and a prophet, with the inspired tongue of a divinity.

I have observed, from the words of several of the critics here cited, that they have an opinion of poetry which I cannot believe to be quite correct. They seem to assume that picturesque imagery, drawn from the surface of natural scenery, combined with a sort of wild fiction of story which goes beyond the bounds of reality, consti-

tutes the primary and most unmixed essence of poetry—I admit that it does constitute very pure and beautiful poetry; but not the highest. The highest must go beyond sublunary objects: there must be an invention of character, not only ideal, but sublime: there must be intermingled intellectual and argumentative greatness: there must be a fable, which embodies abstract truths of severe and mighty import; there must be distinct characters, elevated by grand passions, each acting according to his own appropriate impulses, and all going forward in regular progression, according to the rules of probability, to the accomplishment of the end proposed.

This has been effected by Milton's epics; but there certainly is an implication on the part of these critics that these compositions have not as much unmixed and positive poetry as the 'Comus;' and this, because of the greater variety of their ingredients, and the introduction of other matter besides imagery and description. Such a reason shows the narrowness of their conception of this divine art. All the finest passages of poetry are complex, in which the heart and understanding have essential co-operation: the bard must imagine what the heart must colour, or perhaps instigate, and the understanding enlighten. Imagery is material, and will not do alone; there must be the union of spirituality with it. The fault of a great part of Pope is, that there is nothing but reasoning, without either imagination or sentiment.

But, to return to 'Comus:' let it not be inferred that I mean in the smallest degree to detract from its merits. I only wish to protest against rules and definitions injurious to still greater poems of the same inimitable author! 'Comus' is perfect in its kind; but a pastoral Mask cannot be put upon a footing with a grand heroic poem.

Milton, when he wrote these strains, was in the very opening of early youth, not more than twenty-four years old. Then all was—

The purple light of love, and bloom of young desires.

The woods and the rivers and all nature then seemed to his eyes to smile with delight; but as years passed along, and he saw the obliquities of mankind and the sorrows of life, his lays took a deeper tone, and his music was more magnificent and soul-moving. The Lady and the two Brothers in 'Comus' are all calm philosophy, and tender, hopeful confidence: to them the dawn is joy; the night-fall, peaceful slumbers: the demons of darkness dare not hurt them. the Lady has faith, even when left alone amid the dangers of a haunted forest. O fond imagination! O beamy visionariness of innocent inexperience!

ARCADES:

Part of a Mask.

PRESENTED AT HAREFIELD,

BEFORE

ALICE, COUNTESS DOWAGER OF DERBY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE same character may be given of the style, sentiments, imagery, and tone of these Fragments, as far as they go, as of 'Comus.' Warton observes:—

"Unquestionably this Mask was a much longer performance. Milton seems only to have written the poetical part, consisting of these three songs, and the recitative soliloquy of the Genius: the rest was probably prose and machinery. In many of Jonson's Masques, the poet but rarely appears, amidst a cumbersome exhibition of heathen gods and mythology. 'Arcades' was acted by persons of Lady Derby's own family. The Genius says, v. 26:—

Stay, gentle swains; for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes:

that is, 'although ye are disguised like rustics, I perceive that ye are of honourable birth; your nobility cannot be concealed.'"

Many parts of the soliloquy of the Genius are very highly poetical, as the passage beginning at v. 56:—

And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tassel'd horn
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant words, and murmurs made to bless.

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON ARCADES.

HAREFIELD.

WE are told by Norden, an accurate topographer, who wrote about the year 1590, in his "Speculum Britanniæ," under Harefield in Middlesex, "There Sir Edmond Anderson, knight, lord chief justice of the common pleas, hath a faire house standing on the edge of the hill; the riuer Colne passing neare the same, through the pleasant meddowes and sweet pastures, yealding both delight and profit." "Spec. Brit." p. i. page 21. I viewed this house a few years ago, when it was for the most part remaining in its original state: it has since been pulled down: the porters' lodges on each side of the gateway are converted into a commodious dwelling-house: it is near Uxbridge: and Milton, when he wrote 'Arcades,' was still living with his father at Horton, near Colnebrook, in the same neighbourhood. He mentions the singular felicity he had in vain anticipated, in the society of his friend Deodate, on the shady banks of the river Colne. 'Epitaph. Damon.' v. 149:—

Imus, et arguta paulum recubamus in umbrâ,
Aut ad aquas Colni, &c.

Amidst the fruitful and delightful scenes of this river, the nymphs and shepherds had no reason to regret, as in the third Song, the Arcadian "Ladon's lilied banks."—T. WARTON.

See an account of Harefield, in Lysons' "Environs of London," with a print of the Countess of Derby's monument there.

It is probable, that these "persons of Lady Derby's own family" were the children of the Earl of Bridgewater, who had married a daughter of the Countess: and 'Arcades' perhaps was acted the year before 'Comus.' In 1632 Milton went to reside with his father at Horton, in the neighbourhood of Harefield; and might have been soon afterwards desired to compose this dramatic entertainment. Lord Brackley, Mr. Thomas Egerton, and Lady Alice Egerton, the performers in 'Comus,' appeared upon the stage at court in 1633, in Carew's Mask of "Cœlum Britannicum;" and 'Arcades' might be a domestic exhibition somewhat prior to that of Carew's Mask; as being intended perhaps to try, and encourage, their confidence and skill, before they performed more publicly. Among the manuscripts that once belonged to Lord Chancellor Egerton, and which are now in the possession of the Marquis of Stafford, there is a curious illustration of domestic manners, on three folio sheets, in an "Account of disbursements for Harefield, where the Lord Keeper Egerton and the Countess of Derby resided in 1602."—TODD.

COUNTESS DOWAGER OF DERBY.

ALICE, Countess Dowager of Derby, married Ferdinando, Lord Strange; who, on the death of his father Henry, in 1594, became Earl of Derby, but died the next year. She was the sixth daughter of Sir John Spenser, of Althorp, in Northamptonshire: she was afterwards married [in 1600] to Lord Chancellor Egerton, who died in 1617. See Dugd. Baron. iii. 251, 414. She died Jan. 26, 1635-6, and was buried at Harefield: 'Arcades' could not therefore have been acted after 1636.

Milton is not the only great English poet who has celebrated this Countess Dowager of Derby. She was the sixth daughter, as we have seen, of Sir John Spenser, with whose family Spenser the poet claimed an alliance. In his "Colin Clout's come home again," written about 1595, he mentions her under the appellation of Amaryllis, with her sisters Phyllis, or Elizabeth; and Charillis, or Anne; these three of Sir John Spenser's daughters being best known at court. See v. 546:—

> Ne less praise-worthie are the sisters three,
> The honor of the noble familie,
> Of which I meanest boast myselfe to be;
> And most that unto them I am so nie:
> Phyllis, Charillis, and sweet Amaryllis

After a panegyric on the first two, he next comes to Amaryllis, or Alice, our Lady, the Dowager of the above-mentioned Ferdinando, Lord Derby, lately dead:—

> But Amaryllis, whether fortunate
> Or else vnfortunate may I aread,
> That freed is from Cupids yoke by fate,
> Since which she doth new bands aduenture dread—
> Shepheard, whatever thou hast heard to be
> In this or that praysd diuersly apart,
> In her thou maiest them all assembled see,
> And seald vp in the threasure of her heart.

And in the same poem, he thus apostrophises to her late husband Earl Ferdinand, under the name Amyntas. See v. 434:—

> Amyntas quite is gone, and lies full low,
> Having his Amaryllis left to mone!
> Helpe, o ye shepheards, helpe ye all in this;—
> Her losse is yours, your losse Amyntas is;
> Amyntas, floure of shepheards pride forlorne:
> He, whilest he liued, was the noblest swaine
> That euer piped on an oaten quill;
> Both did he other which could pipe maintaine,
> And eke could pipe himselfe with passing skill.

And to the same Lady Alice, when Lady Strange, before her husband Ferdinand's

succession to the earldom, Spenser addresses his "Tears of the Muses," published in 1591, in a dedication of the highest regard; where he speaks of "your excellent beautie, your virtuous behauiour, and your noble match with that most honourable lorde, the verie patterne of right nobilitie." He then acknowledges the particular bounties which she had conferred upon the poets. Thus the lady who presided at the representation of Milton's 'Arcades,' was not only the theme, but the patroness of Spenser. The peerage book of this most respectable countess is the poetry of her times.—T. WARTON.

Alice, Countess of Derby, was the youngest of six daughters of Sir John Spenser of Althorp, in Northamptonshire, who died 8th November, 1586, by Katharine, daughter of Sir Thomas Kitson, of Hengrave, in Suffolk, knight,* which Sir John was son of Sir William Spenser, of Althorp, who died 22nd of June, 1532, by Susan, daughter of Sir Richard Knightley, of Fawsly, in Northamptonshire. Sir William was son of another Sir John Spenser, of Althorp, who died 14th April, 1532, only two months before his son, by Isabel, daughter and coheir of Walter Graunt, of Snitterfield, in Warwickshire, Esq.; he was son of William Spenser, Esq., of Redbourne, in Warwickshire, who lived in the reign of Henry VII., by Elizabeth, sister of Sir Richard Empson, knight.

The Countess of Derby's five sisters were all honourably married; and her father was a man of a great estate.

Of her three daughters and coheirs by the Earl of Derby, Anne married Grey Brydges, fifth Lord Chandos; Frances married John Egerton, first Earl of Bridgewater; and Elizabeth married Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon.

Todd mentions that Marston wrote a mask, entitled "The Lord and Lady of Huntingdon's Entertainment of their right noble mother, Alice, Countess Dowager of Derby, the first night of her Honour's arrival at the house of Ashby." This Todd found still remaining in manuscript in the Bridgewater Library; and has given a long account of it not necessary to be repeated here.

Lord Falkland wrote a poetical epitaph on this Countess of Huntingdon.

Sir John Spenser, of Althorp, the brother of Alice, Countess of Derby, died 9th January, 1599. His only son, Sir Robert Spenser, was created Lord Spenser of Wormleighton, by King James I., on 21st July, 1603, and died 25th October, 1627.

Camden, in his "Britannia," speaks thus of Althorp:—"Althorp, the seat of the noble family of Spenser, knights, allied to very many houses of great worth and honour, out of which Sir Robert Spenser, the fifth knight in a continual succession, a worthy encourager of virtue and learning, was by his most serene majesty, King James, lately advanced to the honour of Baron Spenser of Wormleighton."

William, who succeeded his father Robert, as second Lord Spenser, died 1636, aged forty-five, and was succeeded by his son Henry, third Baron, who was created Earl of Sunderland, 8th June, 1643, and slain at the battle of Newbury, on 20th September following, at the age of twenty-three: he married Lady Dorothy Sidney, daughter of Robert, Earl of Leicester (Waller's Saccharissa). See Lord Clarendon's character of him.

Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield, by some noble persons of her family; who appear on the scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song:—

I. SONG.

LOOK, nymphs and shepherds, look [a],
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook:

* See Mr. Gage's splendid "History of Hengrave."

[a] *Look, nymphs and shepherds, look, &c.*
See the ninth division of Spenser's "Epithalamion;" and Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," a. i. s. 1.—T. WARTON.

This, this is she[b]
To whom our vows and wishes bend;
Here our solemn search hath end.
Fame, that, her high worth to raise,
Seem'd erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise:
Less than half we find express'd;
Envy bid conceal the rest.
Mark, what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne,
Shooting her beams like silver threads[c];
This, this is she alone,
Sitting like a goddess bright,
In the centre of her light.
Might she the wise Latona be,
Or the towr'd Cybele,
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds[d].
Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparallel'd?

As they come forward, the Genius of the wood appears, and, turning toward them, speaks:—

Gen. Stay, gentle swains; for, though in this diguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes:
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
Of that renowned flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus[e] who by secret sluce
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse;
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
Fair silver-buskin'd nymphs, as great and good;
I know, this quest of yours, and free intent,
Was all in honour and devotion meant

[b] *This, this is she.*

Our curiosity is gratified in discovering, even from slight and almost imperceptible traits, that Milton had here been looking back to Jonson, the most eminent mask-writer that had yet appeared, and that he had fallen upon some of his formularies and modes of address. For thus Jonson, in an "Entertaynment at Altrop," 1603, Works, 1616, p. 874:—

This is shee,
This is shee,
In whose world of grace, &c.—T. WARTON.

[c] *Shooting her beams like silver threads.*

See 'Par. Lost,' b. iv. 555. But here Milton seems to bear in mind the cloth of state under which Queen Elizabeth is seated, and which is represented, "Faer. Qu." v. ix. 28.—TODD.

[d] *Give her odds.*

Too lightly expressed for the occasion.—HURD.

[e] *Divine Alpheus, &c.*

Virgil, Æn. iii. 694:—

Alpheum, fama est, huc Elidis amnem
Occultas egisse vias subter mare, qui nunc
Ore, Arethusa, tuo, &c.—NEWTON.

To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine;
And, with all helpful service, will comply
To further this night's glad solemnity;
And lead ye, where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,
Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon:
For know, by lot from Jove I am the power
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove [f]
With ringlets quaint, and wanton windings wove:
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds, and blasting vapours chill:
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew [g],
And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,
Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites [h],
Or hurtful worm with canker'd venom bites.
When evening gray doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallow'd ground;
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumbering leaves [i], or tassel'd horn [j]
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout [k]

[f] *And curl the grove.*

So Drayton, "Polyolb." s. vii. vol. ii. p. 786, of a grove on a hill.—

Where she her curled head unto the eye may show.—T. WARTON.

[g] *And from the boughs brush off the evil dew.*

The expression and idea are Shakspearian, but in a different sense and application. Caliban says, "Tempest," a. i. s. 4:—

As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd,
With raven's feather, from unwholesome fen, &c.

Compare 'Paradise Lost,' b. v. 429.

The phrase hung on the mind of Gray:—

Brushing with hasty steps the dew away.—T. WARTON.

[h] *And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,*
Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites.

Compare Shakspeare, "Julius Cæsar," a. i. s. 3. "King Lear," a. iv. s. 7.—T. WARTON.

[i] *The slumbering leaves.*

Ovid, Met. xi. 600:—"Non moti flamine rami."—TODD.

[j] *Tassel'd horn.*

Spenser, "Faer. Queene," I. viii. 3:—

a horn of bugle small,
Which hung adowne his side in twisted gold
And tassels gay.—NEWTON.

[k] *Haste I all about,*
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout.

So the magician Ismeno, when he consigns the enchanted forest to his demons, "Gier. Lib." c xiii. st. 8. Poets are magicians: what they create they command. The business of one imaginary being is easily transferred to another; from a bad to a good demon.—T. WARTON.

With puissant words, and murmurs made to bless:
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath lock'd up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial sirens' harmony,
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres[l]
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle[m] round,
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion[n] doth in musick lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould, with gross unpurged ear[o];
And yet such musick worthiest were to blaze
The peerless highth of her immortal praise,
Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,
If my inferiour hand or voice could hit
Inimitable sounds: yet, as we go,
Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show,

[l] *Then listen I*
To the celestial sirens' harmony,
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres.

This is Plato's system. Fate, or Necessity, holds a spindle of adamant; and, with her three daughters, Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos, who handle the vital web wound about the spindle, she conducts or turns the heavenly bodies: nine Muses, or sirens, sit on the summit of the spheres, which, in their revolutions, produce the most ravishing musical harmony: to this harmony, the three daughters of Necessity perpetually sing in correspondent tones: in the meantime, the adamantine spindle, which is placed in the lap or on the knees of Necessity, and on which "the fate of men and gods is wound," is also revolved.—T. Warton.

[m] *The adamantine spindle.*

In a fragment of Sophocles' "Phædra," preserved in Stobæus, the Parcæ have adamantine shuttles, with which they weave the appointed fates of mortals.—Dunster.

[n] *Such sweet compulsion, &c.*

See 'Par. Lost,' ix. 474.—Todd.

[o] *After the heavenly tune, which none can hear*
Of human mould, with gross unpurged ear.

I do not recollect this reason in Plato, the "Somnium Scipionis," or Macrobius: but our author, in an academic Prolusion on the 'Musick of the Spheres,' having explained Plato's theory, assigns a similar reason:—"Quod autem nos hanc minime audiamus harmoniam, sane in causa videtur esse furacis Promethei audacia, quæ tot mala hominibus invexit, et simul hanc felicitatem nobis abstulit, qua nec unquam frui licebit, dum sceleribus cooperti belluinis, cupiditatibus obrutescimus: at si pura, si nivea gestaremus pectora, tum quidem suavissima illa stellarum circumeuntium musica personarent aures nostræ et opplerentur."—T. Warton.

Compare Shakspeare, "Midsummer Night's Dream," a. iii. s. 1:—

And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.

And see 'Comus,' v. 997.—T. Warton.

See also his 'Prose Works,' edit. 1698, vol. i. 153:—"God purged also our deaf ears, and prepared them to attend his second warning trumpet," &c.—Todd.

I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
And so attend ye toward her glittering state [p];
Where ye may all that are of noble stem,
Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem [q].

II. SONG.

O'er the smooth enamel'd green
Where no print of step hath been,
Follow me as I sing
And touch the warbled string,
Under the shady roof
Of branching elm star-proof [r].
Follow me;
I will bring you where she sits,
Clad in splendour as befits
Her deity.
Such a rural queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

III. SONG.

Nymphs and shepherds dance no more
By sandy Ladon's lilied banks;
On old Lycæus, or Cylene hoar,
Trip no more in twilight ranks;
Though Erymanth your loss deplore,
A better soil shall give ye thanks.
From the stony Mænalus
Bring your flocks, and live with us;
Here ye shall have greater grace,
To serve the lady of this place.
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
Such a rural queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

[p] *And so attend ye toward her glittering state.*

See note on 'Il Penseroso,' v. 37. A "state" signified, not so much a throne or chair of state, as a canopy: thus Drayton, "Polyolb." s. xxvi. vol. iii. p. 1168, of a royal palace:—

> Who, led from room to room, amazed is to see
> The furniture and states, which all embroideries be,
> The rich and sumptuous beds, &c.—T. WARTON.

[q] *Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.*

Fairfax, in the metrical Dedication of his Tasso to Queen Elizabeth, commands his Muse not to approach too boldly, nor to soil "her vesture's hem."—T. WARTON.

[r] *Of branching elm star-proof.*

One of Peacham's "Emblems" is the picture of a large and lofty grove, which defies the influence of the moon and stars appearing over it. This grove, in the verses affixed, is said to be "not pierceable to power of any starre."—T. WARTON.

LYCIDAS:

A Monody.

PRELIMINARY NOTE ON LYCIDAS.

MR. EDWARD KING.

THIS poem first appeared in a Cambridge collection of verses on the death of Mr. Edward King, fellow of Christ's College, printed at Cambridge in a thin quarto, 1638. It consists of three Greek, nineteen Latin, and thirteen English poems.

Edward King, the subject of this Monody, was the son of Sir John King, knight, secretary for Ireland, under Queen Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I. He was sailing from Chester to Ireland, on a visit to his friends and relations in that country: these were, his brother, Sir Robert King, knight; and his sisters, Anne, wife of Sir George Caulfield, Lord Clermont, and Margaret, above-mentioned, wife of Sir George Loder, Chief Justice of Ireland; Edward King, Bishop of Elphin, by whom he was baptized; and William Chappel, then Dean of Cashel, and Provost of Dublin College, who had been his tutor at Christ's College, Cambridge, and was afterwards Bishop of Cork and Ross, and in this Pastoral is probably the same person that is styled "old Damœtas," v. 36—when, in calm weather, not far from the English coast, the ship, a very crazy vessel, "a fatal and perfidious bark," struck on a rock, and suddenly sunk to the bottom with all that were on board, not one escaping, August 10, 1637. King was now only twenty-five years old: he was perhaps a native of Ireland.

At Cambridge he was distinguished for his piety, and proficiency in polite literature: he has no inelegant copy of Latin iambics prefixed to a Latin comedy called "Senile Odium," acted at Queen's College, Cambridge, by the youth of that society, and written by P. Hausted, Cantab. 1633, 12mo. I will not say how far these performances justify Milton's panegyric on his friend's poetry, v. 9:—

> Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew
> Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.

This poem, as appears by the Trinity manuscript, was written in November, 1637, when Milton was not quite twenty-nine years old.—T. WARTON.

In the Latin poetical paraphrase of 'Lycidas' by William Hog (the translator also of 'Paradiso Lost') dated 1694, there is an English address to the reader; giving a brief account of the subject of the poem. It is there said, that "Some escaped in the boat; and great endeavours were used in that great consternation to get Mr. King into the boat, which did not prevail, so he and all with him were drowned, except those only that escaped in the boat." And yet, in the monumental inscription prefixed to the Collection of Verses on Mr. King's death, it is related "Navi in scopulum allisa, et rimis ex ictu fatiscente, dum alii vectores vitæ mortalis frustra satagerent, immortalem anhelans, in genua provolutus oransque, una cum navigio ab aquis absorptus, animam Deo reddidit."

Dr. Newton has observed that 'Lycidas' is with great judgment made of the pastoral kind, as both Mr. King and Milton had been designed for holy orders and the pastoral care, which gives a peculiar propriety to several passages in it.—TODD.



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Dr. Johnson's censure of the 'Lycidas' is so extraordinary, and so tastelessly malignant, that it is impossible to pass it over without some discussion. Whatever principle of poetry we adopt, it is absolutely indefensible. We know that the critic had little feeling for the higher orders of poetry; but his captious objections to this composition could only proceed from blind prejudice and hatred. He had probably talked in this way from an early stage of his literary career, and was now ashamed to retract.

Whatever stern grandeur Milton's two epics and his drama, written in his latter days, exhibit; by whatever divine invention they are created; 'Lycidas' and 'Comus' have a fluency, a sweetness, a melody, a youthful freshness, a dewy brightness of description, which those gigantic poems have not. It is true that 'Lycidas' has no deep grief; its clouds of sorrow are every where pierced by the golden rays of a splendid and joyous imagination: the ingredients are all poetical, even to single words; the epithets are all picturesque and fresh; and the whole are combined into a splendid tissue, as new in their position as they are radiant in their union. The unexpected transitions from one to the other at once surprise and delight: they are like the heavens of an autumnal evening, when they are lighted up by electric flames. The contrasts of sorrow, and hope, and glory, keep us in a state of mingled excitement to the end: the imagery never flags: though it blazes with the most beautiful forms of inanimate nature, and all sorts of pastoral pictures; yet the whole are by some spell or other made intellectual and spiritual: they do not play merely upon the mirror of the fancy.

When Johnson said that of this poem "the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing," where was his apprehension of beautiful language, and where his ear?

Take any line as a specimen:—

> Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.

Or this passage:—

> But, O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
> Now thou art gone, and never must return!
> Thee, shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
> With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
> And all their echoes mourn:
> The willows, and the hazel copses green,
> Shall now no more be seen
> Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.

Compare any of Pope's descriptions, so lauded by Johnson, with these lines.

Johnson says that the rhymes of 'Lycidas' are ill-arranged, and too distant from each other: I know not that they are ever so; but if this is the case in one or two instances, they are in general most musically and happily placed.

The occasional allusions to the heathen mythology, by way of illustration or allegory, were never before prohibited or blamed by any critic; and are only censured here from a mere resolve to find fault.

The caviller contends that here is no grief, for grief does not deal in imagery or remote allusions; but, as Warton observes, if there is not deep grief, there is rich poetry. Milton's genius lay in strength and sublimity, not tenderness. This was one of a set of academical verses, written to glorify the deceased, and fix his memory upon the list of fame; and by what other possible means could Milton have effected it with equal success?

In what way would the critic have expressed his sorrow? Johnson was no more remarkable for tenderness than Milton: his gravity was gloom, not tenderness. Milton saw in the death of the virtuous and accomplished an elevation to a higher and happier sphere of existence; Johnson beheld death with anxiety, doubt, and fear: Milton exulted; Johnson sighed, trembled, and was despondent: the thought paralysed Johnson; it cheered and irradiated Milton. Thus it supplied them with opposite figures and modes of expression.*

* Tickell's "Elegy on Addison" is probably the model which Johnson would have chosen. Tickell is solemn, and sometimes tender; but he has none of Milton's richness and illumination.

That prime charm of poetry, the rapidity and the novelty, yet the natural association of beautiful ideas, is pre-eminently exhibited in 'Lycidas,' where the sudden transitions to contrasted images and sentiments keep the mind in a state of delightful ferment;

> And o'er the cheek of sorrow throw
> A melancholy grace.

It strikes me, that there is no poem of Milton, in which the pastoral and rural imagery is so breathing, so brilliant, and so new, as in this: the tone which has most similitude to it, is that of some descriptive passages of Shakspeare, whose simple brightness and modulation of words seem always to have dwelt on Milton's memory and ear.

But though strength was Milton's characteristic, there are many passages, many turns of thought and expression, in this poem, which are not wanting in tenderness, in pathetic recollections, and tearful sighs; in that sort of grief, which, let Johnson say what he will, belongs to true poetry: in grief neither factitious nor gloomy, but genuine, though hopeful, and mingled with rays of light, though melancholy.

Perhaps I should be inclined to say more on this exquisite and inimitable Elegy; but I must forbear, lest those remarks should run to an extent disproportioned to its length.

In this Monody the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their highth.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere[a],
I come to pluck your berries[b] harsh and crude;
And, with forced fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year[c]:
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,

[a] *Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere.*

Newton has supposed, that Milton, while he mentions Apollo's laurel, to characterise King as a poet, adds the myrtle, the tree of Venus, to show that King was also of a proper age for love. We will allow that King, whatever hidden meaning the poet might have in enumerating the myrtle, was of a proper age for love, being now twenty-five years old: and the ivy our critic thinks to be expressive of King's learning, for which it was a reward. In the meantime, I would not exclude another probable implication; by plucking the berries and the leaves of laurel, myrtle, and ivy, he might intend to point out the pastoral or rural turn of this poem.—T. Warton.

The opening of this poem always struck me as singularly beautiful. There is a sort of felicity in this combination of poetic words, which cannot be defined.

[b] *I come to pluck your berries, &c.*

This beautiful allusion to the unripe age of his friend, in which death "shatter'd his leaves before the mellowing year," is not antique, I think, but of those secret graces of Spenser. See "Shep. Cal." Jan. ver. 37. The poet there says of himself, under the name of Colin Clout, "All so my lustful leafe is drie and sere."—Richardson.

Milton had most probably in his mind a passage in Cicero "De Senectute," where the death of young persons is compared to unripe fruit plucked with violence from the tree, and that of old persons to fully ripe mellow fruit that falls naturally: "Et quasi poma ex arboribus, cruda si sint, vi avelluntur; si matura et cocta, decidunt; sic vitam adolescentibus vis aufert, senibus maturitas."—Dunster.

[c] *Mellowing year.*

Here is an inaccuracy of the poet: the "mellowing" year could not affect the leaves of the laurel, the myrtle, and the ivy; which last is characterised before as "never sere."—T. Warton.

Compels me to disturb your season due:
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme[d].
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear[e].
  Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well,
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain, and coy[f] excuse:
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined urn;
And, as he passes, turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud[g].
  For we were nursed upon the self-same hill;
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.
Together both[h], ere the high lawns appear'd

[d] *And build the lofty rhyme.*

A beautiful Latinism. Hor. Ep. I. iii. 24:—"Seu condis amabile carmen." And "De Arte. Poet." v. 436:—"Si carmina condes."—NEWTON.

Todd here cites a passage from Spenser's "Ruines of Rome," st. 25. I see little similitude.

[e] *Melodious tear.*

For song, or plaintive elegiac strain, the cause of tears.—HURD.

[f] *Coy.*

The epithet "coy" is at present restrained to person: anciently it was more generally combined. Our author has the same use and sense of "coy" in the 'Apology for Smectymnuus:'—"Thus lie at the mercy of a coy flurting style, to be girded with frumps and curtall gibes," &c.—T. WARTON.

[g] *My sable shroud.*

Mr. Dunster has little doubt that Milton here means the "dark grave;" *shroud* being the Miltonic word for recess, harbour, hiding-place; yet he has overlooked the passages in Sylvester, which occasioned, in my opinion, the introduction of "sable shroud" into Milton's Monody. And first, Sylvester, uses the precise expression, though with a different meaning, in his "Bethulian's Rescue," lib. iv. p. 991, edit. 1621:—

Still therefore, cover'd with a sable shroud,
Hath she kept home, as to all sorrow vow'd.

But in Sylvester's translation of "Du Bartas," ed. supr. p. 114, we find:—

O happy pair! upon your sable toomb
May mel and manna ever showering come.

And what farther confirms me in the application of tomb or grave to Milton's text is a passage from a funeral Elegy of Sylvester, edit. supr. p. 1171:—

From my sad cradle to my sable chest,
Poore pilgrim I did finde few months of rest.—TODD.

I cannot think that, applied to Lycidas, "shroud" means tomb, as Todd supposes, because Sylvester so used it in reference to a different case.

[h] *Together both, &c.*

From the regularity of his pursuits, the purity of his pleasures, his temperance, and general simplicity of life, Milton habitually became an early riser: hence he gained an acquaintance with the beauties of the morning, which he so frequently contemplated with delight, and has therefore so repeatedly described in all their various appearances:

Under the opening eyelids of the morn[i],
We drove afield[j]; and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn[k],
Battening our flocks[l] with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star, that rose at evening bright,
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel[m].
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Temper'd to the oaten flute;
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.
  But, O, the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!

and this is a subject which he delineates with the lively pencil of a lover. In the 'Apology for Smectymnuus,' he declares, "Those morning haunts are where they should be, at home; not sleeping or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring in winter often before the sound of any bell awakens men to labour or devotion; in summer, as oft as the bird that first rouses, or not much tardyer, to read good authors," &c. 'Prose Works,' i. 109. In 'L'Allegro,' one of the first delights of his cheerful man is to hear the "lark begin his flight." His lovely landscape of Eden always wears its most attractive charms at sun-rising, and seems most delicious to our first parents "at that season prime for sweetest scents and airs." In the present instance, he more particularly alludes to the stated early hours of a collegiate life, which he shared "on the self-same hill," with his friend Lycidas at Cambridge.—T. Warton.

This is a beautiful note of T. Warton, characteristic of that amiable critic and poet, and such as few others, if any, could have written.

[i] *Under the opening eyelids of the morn.*

Perhaps from Thomas Middleton's "Game at Chesse," an old forgotten play, published about the end of the reign of James I., 1625:—

Like a pearl
Dropt from the opening eyelids of the morn
Upon the bashful rose.—T. Warton.

The "eyelids of the morning" is a phrase of sublime origin. See Job iii. 9:—"Neither let it see the dawning of the day," or, as in the margin, "the eyelids of the morning." See also chap. xli. 18. And Sophocles, "Antigone," v. 103.—Todd.

[j] *We drove afield.*

That is, "we drove our flocks afield." I mention this, that Gray's echo of the passage in the "Church-yard Elegy," yet with another meaning, may not mislead many careless readers:—"How jocund did they drive their team afield!"—T. Warton.

Gray seems to have had every expression of Milton by heart.

[k] *Her sultry horn.*

"We continued together till noon," &c. The gray-fly is called by the naturalists the gray-fly, or trumpet-fly; and "sultry horn" is the sharp hum of this insect at noon, or the hottest part of the day. But by some this has been thought the chaffer, which begins its flight in the evening.—T. Warton.

[l] *Battening our flocks.*

To "batten" is both neutral and active, to grow or to make fat. The neutral is most common. Shakspeare's "Hamlet," a. iii. s. 4:—

Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor?—T. Warton.

[m] *His westering wheel.*

Drawing toward the west. So in Chaucer's "Troil and Creseide," b. ii. 905:—

The sonne
Gan westring fast and dounward for to wrie.—Newton.

Thee, shepherd, thee, the woods, and desert caves[n],
With wild thyme and the gadding vine[o] o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn:
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose[p],
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;—
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
  Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas[q]?
For neither were ye playing on the steep,
Where your old bards, the famous druids, lie;
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high[r];
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream[s].
Ay me! I fondly dream!

[n] *Thee, shepherd, thee, the woods, and desert caves, &c.*

The passage most similar, in all its circumstances, to the present, is, in the opinion of Mr. Dunster, the lamentation for Orpheus in Ovid, Met. xi. 43:—

Te mœstæ volucres, Orpheu; te turba ferarum,
Te rigidi silices, tua carmina sæpe secutæ
Fleverunt sylvæ; positis te frondibus arbos.—Todd.

[o] *The gadding vine.*

Dr. Warburton supposes, that the vine is here called "gadding," because, being married to the elm, like other wives she is fond of gadding abroad, and seeking a new associate. Tully, in a beautiful description of the growth of the vine, says, that it spreads itself abroad, "multiplici lapsu et erratico." "De Senectute."—T. Warton.

[p] *As killing as the canker to the rose.*

The whole context of words in this and the four following lines is melodious and enchanting.

[q] *Where were ye, &c.*

This burst is as magnificent as it is affecting.

[r] *Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high.*

In Drayton's "Polyolbion," Mona is introduced reciting her own history; where she mentions her thick and dark groves as the favourite residence of the Druids. For the Druid-sepulchres, in the preceding line, at Kerig y Druidion, in the mountains of Denbighshire, he consulted Camden's "Britannia."—T. Warton.

[s] *Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream.*

In Spenser, the river Dee is the haunt of magicians. Merlin used to visit old Timon, in a green valley under the foot of the mountain Rauranvaur in Merionethshire, from which this river springs. "Faerie Queene," I. ix. 4. The Dee has been made the scene of a variety of ancient British traditions. The city of Chester was called by the Britons the "fortress upon Dee;" which was feigned to have been founded by the giant Leon, and to have been the place of King Arthur's magnificent coronation: but there is another and perhaps a better reason, why Deva's is a "wisard" stream. In Drayton, this river is styled the "hallowed," and the "holy," and the "ominous flood." In our author's 'Vacation Exercise,' Dee is characterised "ancient hallow'd Dee," v. 91. Much superstition was founded on the circumstance of its being the ancient boundary between England and Wales: and Drayton, in his Tenth Song, having recited this part of its history, adds, that by changing its fords, it foretold good or evil, war or peace, dearth or plenty, to either country. He then introduces the Dee, over which King Edgar had been rowed by eight kings, relating the story of Brutus. Milton appears to have taken a particular pleasure in mentioning this venerable river. In the beginning of his first Elegy, he almost goes out of his way to specify his friend's

Had ye been there—for what could that have done?
What could the Muse[t] herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal Nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
  Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise[u]
(That last infirmity of noble mind),
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze[v],

residence on the banks of the Dee; which he describes with the picturesque and real circumstance of its tumbling headlong over rocks and precipices into the Irish Sea. But to return home to the text immediately lying before us. In the midst of this wild imagery, the tombs of the Druids, dispersed over the solitary mountains of Denbighshire, the shaggy summits of Mona, and the wizard waters of Deva, Milton was in his favourite track of poetry. He delighted in the old British traditions and fabulous histories: but his imagination seems to have been in some measure warmed, and perhaps directed to these objects, by reading Drayton; who, in the Ninth and Tenth Songs of his "Polyolbion," has very copiously enlarged, and almost at one view, on this scenery. It is, however, with great force and felicity of fancy, that Milton, in transferring the classical seats of the Muses to Britain, has substituted places of the most romantic kind, inhabited by Druids, and consecrated by the visions of British bards; and it has been justly remarked, how coldly and unpoetically Pope, in his very correct Pastorals, has on the same occasion selected only the "fair fields" of Isis, and the "winding vales" of Cam: but at the same time there is an immediate propriety in the substitution of these places, which should not be forgotten, and is not I believe obvious to every reader. The mountains of Denbighshire, the Isle of Man, and the banks of the Dee, are in the vicinity of the Irish seas where Lycidas was shipwrecked. It is thus Theocritus asks the nymphs, how it came to pass, that, when Daphnis died, they were not in the delicious vales of Peneus, or on the banks of the great torrent Anapus, the sacred water of Acis, or on the summits of mount Ætna: because all these were the haunts or the habitation of the shepherd Daphnis. These rivers and rocks have a real connexion with the poet's subject.—T. WARTON.

Here is another note of T. Warton, which combines a thousand charms of poetry, history, and taste.

[t] *What could the Muse, &c.*

See 'Paradise Lost,' b. vii. 37, of Orpheus torn in pieces by the Bacchanalians:—"Nor could the Muse defend her son." And his murderers are called "that wild rout," v. 34. Calliope was the mother of Orpheus. Lycidas, as a poet, is here tacitly compared with Orpheus. They were both victims of the water.—T. WARTON.

[u] *Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise, &c.*

These noble sentiments, Mr. Warton has observed, Milton afterwards dilated or improved in 'Paradise Regained,' b. iii. 24, &c.—TODD.

No lines have been more often cited, and more popular than these; nor more justly instructive and inspiriting.

[v] *And think to burst out into sudden blaze.*

He is speaking of fame. So in 'Paradise Regained,' b. iii. 47:—"For what is glory but the blaze of fame," &c.—T. WARTON.

Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears[w],
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise[x],"
Phœbus replied, and touch'd my trembling ears[y]:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world[z], nor in broad rumour lies;
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes[a],
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove:
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O, fountain Arethuse[b], and thou honour'd flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds!
That strain I heard was of a higher mood:
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the herald of the sea
That came in Neptune's plea:
He ask'd the waves, and ask'd the felon winds[c],
What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?

[w] *Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears.*

In Shakspeare are "the shears of Destiny" with more propriety, "King John," a. iv. s. 2. The king says to Pembroke,—

Think you I bear the shears of destiny?

Milton, however, does not here confound the Fates and the Furies. He only calls Destiny a Fury.—T. WARTON.

[x] *But not the praise, &c.*

"But the praise is not intercepted." While the poet, in the character of a shepherd, is moralising on the uncertainty of human life, Phœbus interposes with a sublime strain, above the tone of pastoral poetry: he then, in an abrupt and elliptical apostrophe, at "O, fountain Arethuse," hastily recollects himself, and apologises to his rural Muse, or in other words to Arethusa and Mincius, the celebrated streams of bucolic song, for having so suddenly departed from pastoral allusions, and the tenor of his subject: "but I could not," he adds, "resist the sudden and awful impulse of the god of verse, who interrupted me with a strain of higher mood, and forced me to quit for a moment my pastoral ideas: but I now resume my rural oaten pipe, and proceed as I began." In the same manner, he reverts to his rural strain, after St. Peter's "dread voice," with "Return, Alpheus."—T. WARTON.

[y] *Phœbus replied, and touch'd my trembling ears.*

Virgil, Ecl. vi. 3:—

Cynthius aurem
Vellit, et admonuit.—PECK.

[z] *Nor in the glistering foil*
Set off to the world.

Perhaps with a remembrance of Shakspeare, "Henry IV." part I. a. i. s. 2:—

And, like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes,
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.—T. WARTON.

[a] *Those pure eyes.*

Perhaps from Scripture:—"God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." And hence an epithet, sufficiently hackneyed in modern poetry, 'Comus,' v. 213:—"Welcome, pure-eyed Faith."—T. WARTON.

[b] *O, fountain Arethuse.*

In giving Arethusa the distinctive appellation of "fountain," Milton closely and learnedly attends to the ancient Greek writers.—T. WARTON.

[c] *The felon winds.*

i. e. the cruel winds.—TODD.

And question'd every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beaked promontory[d]:
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings[e],
That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd;
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark[f],
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow[g],
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim[h], and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower, inscribed with woe.
Ah! who hath reft, quoth he, my dearest pledge[i]?

[d] *Each beaked promontory.*

That is, prominent or projecting like the beak of a bird.—T. WARTON.

[e] *And sage Hippotades their answer brings.*

Æolus, the son of Hippotas.—T. WARTON.

[f] *That fatal and perfidious bark,*
Built in the eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark.

Although Dr. Newton mentions the "Ille et nefasto," and "Mala soluta navis exit alite," of Horace, as two passages similar to this, yet he has not observed how much more poetical and striking is the imagery of Milton: that the ship was "built in the eclipse, and rigg'd with curses."—JOS. WARTON.

Evidently with a view to the enchantments of "Macbeth:"—

Slips of yew,
Silver'd in the moon's eclipse.

Again, in the same incantation:—"Root of hemlock digg'd in the dark." The shipwreck was occasioned, not by a storm, but by the bad conduct of the ship, unfit for so dangerous a navigation.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Went footing slow.*

"Footing slow," as Mr. Dunster observes, as meant to mark the sluggish course of the river Cam, is exactly Claudian's description of the Mincius,—"tardusque meatu Mincius."—TODD.

[h] *Figures dim.*

Alluding to the fabulous traditions of the high antiquity of Cambridge: but how Cam was distinguished by a "hairy mantle" from other rivers which have herds and flocks on their banks, I know not; unless "the budge doctors of the Stoick fur," as Milton calls them in 'Comus,' had lent him their academic robes.—WARBURTON.

It is very probable that the "hairy mantle," being joined with the "sedge bonnet," may mean his rushy or reedy banks. It would be difficult to ascertain the meaning of "figures dim." Perhaps the poet himself had no very clear or determinate idea; but, in obscure and mysterious expressions, leaves something to be supplied or explained by the reader's imagination.—T. WARTON.

The "mantle hairy," and the "bonnet sedge," are thus ably illustrated in a note by Mr. Plumptre, subjoined to his elegant Greek translation of 'Lycidas,' 1797:—"Chlamydem scilicet e conferva rivulari, quæ copiose Camo innatat; petasum vero ex ulva notis quodammodo per folia incertis, intus signata, et ad marginem foliorum ferrata, more hyacinthini *al, al.*" The "figures dim" may be considered as referring to the "sedge bonnet;" in which opinion Mr. Plumptre and Mr. Dunster concur; and the latter also remarks, that on sedge leaves, or flags, when dried, or even beginning to wither, there are not only certain dim, or indistinct, and dusky streaks, but also a variety of dotted marks ("scrawled over"), as Milton had at first written, on the edge, which withers before the rest of the flag.—TODD.

The last part of Warton's note contains a sagacious observation, as to the spells of poetry, and as just as sagacious.

Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake:
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain;
The golden opes, the iron shuts amain:
He shook his mitred locks[j], and stern bespake:—
How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such, as for their bellies' sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold[k]!
Of other care they little reckoning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest!
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheephook, or have learn'd aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes[l] of wretched straw:
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed;
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw

[i] *Ah! who hath reft, quoth he, my dearest pledge?*

My dearest child; as children were simply called by the Latins, *pignora*, pledges.—Richardson.

[j] *He shook his mitred locks.*

It is much that this inveterate enemy of prelacy would allow Peter to be a bishop: but the whole circumstance is taken from the Italian satirists. Besides, I suppose he thought it sharpened his satire to have the prelacy condemned by one of their own order.—Warburton.

[k] *Such, as for their bellies' sake*
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!

He here animadverts on the endowments of the church, at the same time insinuating that they were shared by those only who sought the emoluments of the sacred office, to the exclusion of a learned and conscientious clergy. Thus in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 193:—

So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold;
So since into his church lewd hirelings climb.

Even after the dissolution of the hierarchy, he held this opinion. In his sixteenth Sonnet, written 1652, he supplicates Cromwell—

To save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

During the usurpation, he published a pamphlet entitled 'The likeliest means to remove hirelings out of the church,' against the revenues transferred from the old ecclesiastic establishment to the Presbyterian ministers. See also his book 'Of Reformation,' &c.—T. Warton.

[l] *Grate on their scrannel pipes.*

No sound of words can be more expressive of the sense; and how finely has he imitated, or rather improved, a passage in Virgil! Ecl. iii. 26:—

Non tu in triviis, indocte, solebas
Stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen?

I remember not to have seen the word "scrannel" in any other author; nor can I find it in any dictionary or glossary that I have consulted; but I presume it answers to the "stridenti" of Virgil.—Newton.

"Scrannel" is thin, lean, meagre. A scrannel pipe of straw is contemptuously for Virgil's "tenuis avena."—T. Warton.

Daily devours apace and nothing sed[m]:
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more[n].
  Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past,
That shrunk thy streams[o]; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use[p]

[m] *Daily devours apace, and nothing sed.*

Some suppose, that our author in this expression insinuates the connivance of the court at the secret growth of popery: but perhaps Milton might have intended a general reflection on what the puritans called "unpreaching prelates," and a liturgical clergy, who did not place the whole of religion in lectures and sermons three hours long: or, with a particular reference to present circumstances, he might mean the clergy of the church of England were silent, and made no remonstrances against these encroachments.—T. Warton.

[n] *But that two-handed engine at the door*
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.

In these lines our author anticipates the execution of Archbishop Laud by a "two-handed engine," that is, the axe; insinuating that his death would remove all grievances in religion, and complete the reformation of the church. Dr. Warburton supposes, that St. Peter's sword, turned into the two-handed sword of romance, is here intended: but this supposition only embarrasses the passage. Michael's sword, "with huge two-handed sway," is evidently the old Gothic sword of chivalry, 'Paradise Lost,' b. vi. 251: this is styled an "engine," and the expression is a periphrasis for an axe, which the poet did not choose to name in plain terms. The sense, therefore, of the context seems to be:—"But there will soon be an end of these evils; the axe is at hand, to take off the head of him who has been the great abettor of these corruptions of the gospel. This will be done by one stroke." In the mean time, it coincides just as well with the tenor of Milton's doctrine, to suppose that he alludes in a more general acceptation to our Saviour's metaphorical axe in the gospel, which was to be "laid to the root of the tree," and whose stroke was to be quick and decisive. Matt. iii. 10. Luke iii. 9:—"And now the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down," &c. That is,—"Things are now brought to a crisis: there is no room for a moment's delay: God is now about to offer the last dispensation of his mercy: if ye reject these terms, no others will be offered afterwards; but ye shall suffer one final sentence of destruction, as a tree," &c. All false religions were at once to be done away by the appearance of Christianity, as when an axe is applied to a barren tree; so now an axe was to be applied to the corruptions of Christianity, which in a similar process were to be destroyed by a single and speedy blow. The time was ripe for this business: the instrument was at hand. It is matter of surprise, that this violent invective against the church of England, and the hierarchy, couched indeed in terms a little mysterious yet sufficiently intelligible, and covered only by a transparent veil of allegory, should have been published under the sanction and from the press of one of our universities; or that it should afterwards have escaped the severest animadversions, at a period when the proscriptions of the Star-chamber, and the power of Laud, were at their height. Milton, under pretence of exposing the faults or abuses of the episcopal clergy, attacks their establishment, and strikes at their existence.—T. Warton.

[o] *That shrunk thy streams.*

In other words, "that silenced my pastoral poetry." The Sicilian Muse is now to return with all her store of rural imagery.—T. Warton.

The imagery is here from the noblest source. "The waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away," Ps. civ. 6, 7. See also Ps. xviii. 13–15. "That shrunk thy streams," is a fine condensation of the scriptural language.—Dunster.

[p] *Where the mild whispers use, &c.*

The word "use," as Dr. Newton has observed, is employed by Spenser in the sense of frequent, inhabit.—Todd.

Of shades and wanton winds and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart-star [q] sparely looks;
Throw hither all your quaint enamel'd eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies [r],
The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freak'd with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate herse where Lycid lies.
For, so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me [s]! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurl'd;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou, perhaps, under the whelming tide,
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world [t];
Or whether thou, to our moist vows [u] denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old [v],

[q] *On whose fresh lap the swart-star, &c.*

The dog-star is called the "swart-star," by turning the effect into the cause. "Swart" is swarthy, brown, &c.—T. Warton.

[r] *Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies.*

It is obvious, that the general texture and sentiment of this line is from the "Winter's Tale," a. iv. s. 5:—

Pale primroses
That die unmarried, &c.

Especially as he had first written "unwedded" for "forsaken," which appears in the edition of 1638. But why does the primrose die unmarried? Not because it blooms and decays before the appearance of other flowers; as in a state of solitude, and without society. The true reason is, because it grows in the shade, uncherished or unseen by the sun, which was supposed to be in love with some sorts of flowers.—T. Warton.

[s] *Ay me!*

Here Mr. Dunster observes, the burst of grief is infinitely beautiful, when properly connected with what precedes it, and to which it refers.—Todd.

[t] *Monstrous world.*

The sea, the world of monsters. Horace, Od. i. iii. 18:—"Qui siccis oculis monstra natantia." Virgil, Æn. vi. 729:—"Quæ marmoreo fert monstra sub æquore pontus."—T. Warton.

[u] *Moist vows.*

Our vows accompanied with tears. As if he had said "vota lacrymosa." But there may be a quaint allusion to the water.—T. Warton.

[v] *Bellerus old.*

No such name occurs in the catalogue of the Cornish giants: but the poet coined it from Bellerium. Bellerus appears in the edition 1638: but at first he had written Corineus, a giant who came into Britain with Brute, and was made lord of Cornwall. Hence Ptolemy, I suppose, calls a promontory near the Land's End, perhaps St. Michael's Mount, "Ocrinium:" from whom also came our author's "Corineida Loxo," Mans. v. 46. Milton, who delighted to trace the old fabulous story of Brutus, relates, that to Corineus Cornwall

Where the great vision of the guarded mount [w]
Looks toward Namancos [x] and Bayona's hold;

fell by lot, "the rather by him liked, for that the hugest giants in rocks and caves were said to lurk there still; which kind of monsters to deal with was his old exercise," 'Hist. Eng.' i. 6. On the south-western shores of Cornwall, I saw a most stupendous pile of rock-work, stretching with immense ragged cliffs and shapeless precipices far into the sea: one of the topmost of these cliffs, hanging over the rest, the people informed me was called the "Giant's Chair." Near it is a cavern called in Cornish the "Cave with the voice."—T. Warton.

[w] *Where the great vision of the guarded mount, &c.*

That part of the coast of Cornwall called the "Land's End," with its neighbourhood, is here intended, in which is the promontory of Bellerium, so named from Bellerus, a Cornish giant: and we are told by Camden, that this is the only part of our island that looks directly towards Spain. But what is the meaning of "The great vision of the guarded mount?" and of the line immediately following, "Look homeward, angel, now, and melt with ruth?" I flatter myself I have discovered Milton's original and leading idea.

Not far from the Land's End in Cornwall, is a most romantic projection of rock, called St. Michael's Mount, into a harbour called Mount's-bay: it gradually rises from a broad basis into a very steep and narrow, but craggy elevation: towards the sea, the declivity is almost perpendicular: at low water it is accessible by land; and not many years ago, it was entirely joined with the present shore, between which and the mount, there is a rock called Chapel-rock. Tradition, or rather superstition, reports that it was anciently connected by a large tract of land, full of churches, with the isles of Scilly. On the summit of St. Michael's Mount a monastery was founded before the time of Edward the Confessor, now a seat of Sir John St. Aubyn. The church, refectory, and many of the apartments, still remain: with this monastery was incorporated a strong fortress, regularly garrisoned: and in a patent of Henry IV., dated 1403, the monastery itself, which was ordered to be repaired, is styled Fortalitium. A stone lantern, in one of the angles of the tower of the church, is called St. Michael's Chair. There is still a tradition, that a vision of St. Michael, seated on this crag, or St. Michael's Chair, appeared to some hermits; and that this circumstance occasioned the foundation of the monastery dedicated to St. Michael: and hence this place was long renowned for its sanctity, and the object of frequent pilgrimages. Nor should it be forgot, that this monastery was a cell to another on a St. Michael's Mount in Normandy, where also was a vision of St. Michael.

But to apply what has been said to Milton: this great vision is the famous apparition of St. Michael, whom he with much sublimity of imagination supposes to be still throned on this lofty crag of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, looking towards the Spanish coast. The "guarded mount" on which this great vision appeared, is simply the fortified mount, implying the fortress above mentioned. With the sense and meaning of the line in question, is immediately connected that of the third line next following, which here I now for the first time exhibit properly pointed:—

Look homeward, angel, now, and melt with ruth.

Here is an apostrophe to the angel Michael, whom we have just seen seated on the guarded mount:—"O angel, look no longer seaward to Namancos and Bayona's hold: rather turn your eyes to another object: look homeward or landward; look towards your own coast now, and view with pity the corpse of the shipwrecked Lycidas floating thither."

Thyer seems to suppose that the meaning of this last line is—"You, O Lycidas, now an angel, look down from heaven," &c. But how can this be said to "look homeward?" And why is the shipwrecked person to "melt with ruth?" That meaning is certainly much helped by placing a full-point after "surmise," v. 153: but a semicolon there, as we have seen, is the point of the first edition: and to show how greatly such a punctuation ascertains or illustrates our present interpretation, I will take the paragraph a few lines higher, with a short analysis:—"Let every flower be strewed on the hearse where Lycidas lies, so to flatter ourselves for a moment with the notion that his corpse is present; and this (ah me!) while the seas are wafting it here and there, whether beyond the Hebrides, or near the shores of Cornwall," &c.—T. Warton.

[x] *Namancos.*

I once thought that this name was designed for the celebrated Numantia, and that

Look homeward, angel, now; and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more[y], woful shepherds, weep no more;
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor:
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might[z] of Him that walk'd the waves;
Where other groves, and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love[a].
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies[b],

Milton had adopted the spelling from some romance. In the Monthly Magazine for June, 1800, it is observed that "Namancos" must have been intended for the ancient Numantia near Tarragona, on the coast of Catalonia, and that Milton has given a Spanish termination to the word. The observer adds, "I am aware that this place was on the opposite side to Bayona; but let it be remembered, that they are no common eyes which look upon the scene; that they are no less than those of an archangel." Mr. Dunster, noticing the preceding criticism, observes, that "Milton scarcely meant to make his archangel look two ways at once. Acceding," he says, "to Namancos being the ancient Numantia, I shall not hesitate to consider 'Bayona's hold' as the French Bayonne with its citadel, a very strong fortress. To this, Mount's-bay, or the guarded mount, looks, I believe, more directly than to the Spanish Bayona: and the line of vision directed to it would pass at no great distance from that part of the Spanish coast, which lies nearest to the site of the ancient Numantia."

It will however appear that the ancient Numantia, and the French Bayonne, were not the present objects of Milton's consideration. I have been directed by a literary friend to Mercator's "Atlas," edit. fol. Amst. 1623, and again in 1636; and in the map of Galicia, near the point Cape Finisterre, the desired place occurs thus written, "Namancos T." In this map the castle of Bayona makes a very conspicuous figure. Milton most probably recollected this geographical description of the Spanish province.—TODD.

[y] *Weep no more, &c.*

Milton, in this sudden and beautiful transition from the gloomy and mournful strain into that of hope and comfort, imitates Spenser in his eleventh Eclogue, where, bewailing the death of some maiden of great blood in terms of the utmost grief and dejection, he breaks out all at once in the same manner.—THYER.

[z] *Through the dear might, &c.*

Of Him, over whom the waves of the sea had no power. It is a designation of our Saviour, by a miracle which bears an immediate reference to the subject of the poem.—T. WARTON.

[a] *In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.*

Even here, after Lycidas is received into heaven, Milton does not make him an angel: he makes him, indeed, a being of a higher order, the Genius of the shore, as at v. 183. If the poet, in finally disclosing this great change of circumstances, and in this prolix and solemn description of his friend's new situation in the realms of bliss after so disastrous a death, had exalted him into an angel, he would not have forestalled that idea, according to Thyer's interpretation, at v. 163.—T. WARTON.

[b] *In solemn troops, and sweet societies.*

Milton's angelic system, containing many whimsical notions of the associations and subordinations of these sons of light, is to be seen at large in Thomas Aquinas and Peter Lombard: but it was not yet worn out in the common theology of his own

That sing, and singing, in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes[c].
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more:
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good[d]
To all that wander in that perilous flood.
Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray[e];
He touch'd the tender stops of various quills[f],
With eager thought warbling his Dorick lay[g]:
And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay:
At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new[h].

times. The same system, which afforded so commodious a machinery for modern Christian poetry, is frequent in the Italian poets.—T. WARTON.

[c] *And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.*

From Scripture: Isaiah xxv. 8. Rev. vii. 17.—TODD.

[d] *And shalt be good, &c.*

The same compliment that Virgil pays to his Daphnis, Ecl. v. 64:—

Deus, Deus ille, Menalca!
Sis bonus, O, felixque tuis! &c.—THYER.

[e] *The still morn went out with sandals gray, &c.*

"The gray dawn,"—'Par. Lost,' b. vii. 373. "Still," because all is silent at daybreak. But though he began to sing at daybreak, he was so eager, so intent on his song, that he continued till the evening.—T. WARTON.

[f] *He touch'd the tender stops of various quills.*

Some readers are here puzzled with the idea of such stops as belong to the organ. By "stops" he here literally means what we now call the holes of a flute or any species of pipe. He mentions the stops of an organ, but in another manner, in 'Par. Lost,' b. xi. 561. See also b. vii. 596.—T. WARTON.

[g] *With eager thought warbling his Dorick lay.*

This is a Doric lay, because Theocritus and Moschus had respectively written a bucolic on the deaths of Daphnis and Bion: and the name of "Lycidas," now first imported into English pastoral, was adopted, not from Virgil, but from Theocritus, "Idyll." vii. 27.—WARTON.

Mr. Warton is mistaken in asserting that the name of "Lycidas" was first imported into English pastoral by Milton · for Lisle, in his "Pastorall dedication to the King" of his translation of "Du Bartas," 1625, 4to, says—

My former shepheard's song deuised was
To please great Scotus and his Lycidas.—TODD.

[h] *To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.*

So Ph. Fletcher, "Purp. Isl." c. vi. st. 77, edit. 1633:—"To-morrow shall ye feast in pastures new."—T. WARTON.

I will conclude my remarks on this poem with the just observation of Mr. Thyer:—"The particular beauties of this charming pastoral are too striking to need much descanting upon; but what gives the greatest grace to the whole, is that natural and agreeable wildness and irregularity which run quite through it, than which nothing could be better suited to express the warm affection which Milton had for his friend, and the extreme grief he was in for the loss of him. Grief is eloquent, but not formal."—NEWTON.

I see no extraordinary wildness and irregularity, according to Dr. Newton [Mr. Thyer], in the conduct of this little poem. It is true, there is a very original air in it, although it be full of classical imitations: but this, I think, is owing, not to any disorder in the plan, nor entirely to the vigour and lustre of the expression; but, in a good degree, to the looseness and variety of the metre. Milton's ear was a good second to his imagination.—HURD.

Addison says, that he who desires to know whether he has a true taste for history or not, should consider whether he is pleased with Livy's manner of telling a story; so, perhaps it may be said, that he who wishes to know whether he has a true taste for poetry or not, should consider whether he is highly delighted or not with the perusal of Milton's 'Lycidas.' If I might venture to place Milton's works, according to their degrees of poetic excellence, it should be perhaps in the following order: Paradise Lost, Comus, Samson Agonistes, Lycidas, L'Allegro, Il Penseroso. The last three are in such an exquisite strain, says Fenton, that though he had left no other monuments of his genius behind him, his name had been immortal.—Jos. Warton.

Of 'Lycidas,' the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing: what beauty there is, we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions: passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of "rough Satyrs" and "Fauns with cloven heel." Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is nothing new: its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are long ago exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Harvey, that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours, and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines?

> We drove afield, and both together heard
> What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
> Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove afield, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote, that it is never sought because it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers, appear the heathen deities; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping! and how one god asks another what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He, who thus grieves, will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises, will confer no honour.

This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverend combinations. The shepherd likewise is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a superintendent of a Christian flock. Such equivocations are always unskilful; but here they are indecent, and at least approach to impiety; of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious. Such is the power of reputation justly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read 'Lycidas' with pleasure had he not known its author.—Johnson.

Dr. Johnson observes, that 'Lycidas' is filled with the heathen deities; and a long train of mythological imagery, such as a college easily supplies; but it is such also, as even the court itself could now have easily supplied. The public diversions, and books of all sorts, and from all sorts of writers, more especially compositions in poetry, were at this time overrun with classical pedantries: but what writer, of the same period, has made these obsolete fictions the vehicle of so much fancy and poetical description? How beautifully has he applied this sort of allusion to the druidical rocks of Denbighshire, to Mona, and the fabulous banks of Deva! It is objected, that its pastoral form is disgusting; but this was the age of pastoral: and yet 'Lycidas' has but little of the bucolic cant, now so fashionable. The satyrs and fauns are but just mentioned. If any trite rural topics occur, how are they heightened!

> Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd
> Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
> We drove afield, and both together heard
> What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
> Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

Here the daybreak is described by the faint appearance of the upland lawns under the first gleams of light; the sunset by the buzzing of the chaffer; and the night sheds her

fresh dews on their flocks. We cannot blame pastoral imagery, and pastoral allegory, which carry with them so much natural painting. In this piece there is perhaps more poetry than sorrow: but let us read it for its poetry. It is true, that passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of "rough Satyrs with cloven heel:" but poetry does this; and in the hands of Milton does it with a peculiar and irresistible charm. Subordinate poets exercise no invention, when they tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping: but Milton dignifies and adorns these common artificial incidents with unexpected touches of picturesque beauty, with the graces of sentiment, and with the novelties of original genius. It is objected "here is no art, for there is nothing new." To say nothing that there may be art without novelty, as well as novelty without art, I must reply that this objection will vanish, if we consider the imagery which Milton has raised from local circumstances. Not to repeat the use he has made of the mountains of Wales, the Isle of Man, and the river Dee, near which Lycidas was shipwrecked, let us recollect the introduction of the romantic superstition of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, which overlooks the Irish seas, the fatal scene of his friend's disaster.

But the poetry is not always unconnected with passion. The poet lavishly describes an ancient sepulchral rite, but it is made preparatory to a stroke of tenderness: he calls for a variety of flowers to decorate his friend's hearse, supposing that his body was present, and forgetting for a while that it was floating far off in the ocean. If he was drowned, it was some consolation that he was to receive the decencies of burial. This is a pleasing deception: it is natural and pathetic. But the real catastrophe recurs; and this circumstance again opens a new vein of imagination.

Dr. Johnson censures Milton for his allegorical mode of telling that he and Lycidas studied together, under the fictitious images of rural employments, in which he says there can be no tenderness; and prefers Cowley's lamentation of the loss of Harvey, the companion of his labours, and the partner of his discoveries. I know not, if in this similarity of subject Cowley has more tenderness; I am sure he has less poetry: I will allow that he has more wit, and more smart similes. The sense of our author's allegory on this occasion is obvious, and is just as intelligible as if he had used plain terms. It is a fiction, that, when Lycidas died, the woods and caves were deserted, and overgrown with wild thyme and luxuriant vines, and that all their echoes mourned; and that the green copses no longer waved their joyous leaves to his soft strains: but we cannot here be at a loss for a meaning; a meaning, which is as clearly perceived as it is elegantly represented. This is the sympathy of a true poet. We know that Milton and King were not "nursed on the same hill;" that they did not "feed the same flock by fountain, shade, or rill;" and that "rough Satyrs" and "Fauns with cloven heel" never danced to their "rural ditties:" but who hesitates a moment for the application! Nor are such ideas more untrue, certainly not less far-fetched and unnatural, than when Cowley says that he and Harvey studied together every night with such unremitting diligence, that the twin stars of Leda, so famed for love, looked down upon the twin students with wonder from above. And where is the tenderness, when he wishes that, on the melancholy event, the branches of the trees at Cambridge, under which they walked, would combine themselves into a darker umbrage, dark as the grave in which his departed friend was newly laid? Our author has also been censured for mixing religious disputes with pagan and pastoral ideas: but he had the authority of the Mantuan and Spenser, now considered as models in this way of writing. Let me add, that our poetry was not yet purged from its Gothic combinations; nor had legitimate notions of discrimination and propriety so far prevailed, as sufficiently to influence the growing improvements of English composition. These irregularities and incongruities must not be tried by modern criticism.—T. Warton.

The rhymes and numbers, which Dr. Johnson condemns, appear to me as eminent proofs of the poet's judgment; exhibiting in their varied and arbitrary disposition, an ease and gracefulness, which infinitely exceed the formal couplets or alternate rhymes of modern Elegy. Lamenting also the prejudice which has pronounced 'Lycidas' to be vulgar and disgusting, I shall never cease to consider this monody as the sweet effusion of a most poetic and tender mind; entitled, as well by its beautiful melody, as by the frequent grandeur of its sentiments and language, to the utmost enthusiasm of admiration.—Todd.

L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO.

PRELIMINARY NOTES

ON

L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO.

It will be no detraction from the powers of Milton's original genius and invention to remark, that he seems to have borrowed the subject of 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,' together with some particular thoughts, expressions, and rhymes, more especially the idea of a contrast between these two dispositions, from a forgotten poem prefixed to the first edition of Burton's "Anatomie of Melancholy," entitled "The Author's Abstract of Melancholy; or, a dialogue between Pleasure and Pain." Here Pain is Melancholy. It was written, as I conjecture, about the year 1600. I will make no apology for abstracting and citing as much of this poem, as will be sufficient to prove to a discerning reader how far it had taken possession of Milton's mind. The measure will appear to be the same; and, that our author was at least an attentive reader of Burton's book, will be perhaps concluded from the traces of resemblance which may be noticed in passing through the 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso.'

When I goe musing all alone,
Thinking of diverse things foreknown;
When I build castles in the ayre,
Voide of sorrow, voide of feare;
Pleasing myself with phantasmes sweet;
Methinkes the time runnes very fleet.
  All my joyes to this are folly;
  Nought so sweet as Melancholy!
When to myself I act and smile;
With pleasing thoughts the time beguile,
By a brooke side, or wood so greene,
Vnheard, vnsought for, and vnseene;
A thousand pleasures do me blesse, &c.
Methinkes I hear, methinkes I see,
Sweet musicke, wondrous melodie;
Townes, palaces, and cities fine,
Rare beauties, gallant ladies shine;
Whate'er is louely or diuine:
  All other joyes to this are folly;
  Nought so sweet as Melancholy!
Methinkes I heare, methinkes I see,
Ghostes, goblins, fiendes: my phantasie
Presentes a thousand vgly shapes;——
Doleful outcries, fearfull sightes,
My sad and dismall soul affrightes:
  All my griefes to this are folly;
  Nought so damnde as Melancholy!

In Beaumont and Fletcher's "Nice Valour, or Passionate Madman," there is a beautiful song on Melancholy, some of the sentiments of which, as Sympson long since observed, appear to have been dilated and heightened in the 'Il Penseroso.' Milton has more frequently and openly copied the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher than of Shakspeare: one is therefore surprised, that in his panegyric on the stage, he did not mention the twin bards, when he celebrates the "learned sock" of Jonson, and the "wood-notes wild" of Shakspeare: but he concealed his love.—T. Warton.

I will add the song from "Nice Valour," together with the remarks of an ingenious critic on its application to 'Il Penseroso:'—

1.

Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly:
There's nought in this life sweet,
If wise men were to see 't,
But only Melancholy,
O, sweetest Melancholy!

2.

Welcome, folded arms, and fixed eyes;
A sigh, that, piercing, mortifies;
A look, that's fasten'd to the ground:
A tongue chain'd up without a sound.

3.

Fountain-heads, and pathless groves;
Places which pale passion loves;
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly housed, save bats and owls;
A midnight bell, a parting groan;—
These are the sounds we feed upon:
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley:
Nothing's so dainty-sweet as lovely Melancholy.

"It would be, doubtless, in the opinion of all readers, going too far to say, that this song deserves as much notice as the 'Penseroso' itself: but it so happens, that very little of the former can remain unnoticed, whenever the latter is praised. Of this song, the construction is, in the first place, to be admired: it divides into three parts: the first part displays the moral of melancholy; the second, the person or figure; the third, the circumstance, that is, such things as increase or flatter the disposition: nor is it surprising that Milton should be struck with the images and sentiments it affords, most of which are somewhere inserted in the 'Il Penseroso.' It will not, however, be found to have contributed much to the construction of Milton's poem: the subjects they severally exhibit are very different: they are alike only, as shown under the same disposition of melancholy. Beaumont's is the melancholy of the swain; of the mind, that contemplates nature and man but in the grove and the cottage: Milton's is that of a scholar and philosopher; of the intellect, that has ranged the mazes of science, and that decides upon vanity and happiness, from large intercourse with man, and upon extensive knowledge and experience. To say, therefore, that Milton was indebted to Beaumont's song for his 'Penseroso,' would be absurd: that it supplied some images to his poem will be readily allowed; and that it would be difficult to find, throughout the 'Penseroso,' amidst all its variety, any more striking than what Beaumont's second stanza affords, may also be granted. Milton's poem is among those happy works of genius, which leave a reader no choice how his mind shall be affected."—"Cursory remarks on some of the ancient English Poets, particularly Milton."—Lond. printed, but not published, 1789, p. 114.

The date of these poems has not been ascertained; but Mr. Hayley has observed: "It seems probable, that these two enchanting pictures of rural life, and of the diversified delights arising from a contemplative mind, were composed at Horton;" to which place Milton went to reside with his father in 1632, and where he continued at least five years.—Todd.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

When Milton's juvenile poems were revived into notice about the middle of the last century, these two short lyrics became, I think, the most popular: they are very beautiful: but in my opinion far from the best of the poet's youthful productions: they have far less invention than 'Comus' or 'Lycidas;' and surely invention is the primary essential: they have more of fancy than invention, as those two words are in modern use distinguished from each other. Besides, it is clear that they were suggested by the poem affixed to "Burton's Anatomie of Melancholy," and a song in the "Nice Valour" of Beaumont and Fletcher.

There is here no fable, which is absolutely necessary for prime poetry: the rural descriptions are fresh, forcible, picturesque, and most happily selected; but still many of them seem to me much less original than those of 'Lycidas' and 'Comus:' and though there is a certain degree of contemplative sentiment in them all, it is not of so passionate or sublime a kind as in those other exquisite pieces, in which there is more of moral instruction and mingled intellect; and, in short, vastly more of spirituality.

The scenery of nature, animate and inanimate, derives its most intense interest from its connexion with our moral feelings and duties, and our ideal visions. If I am not mistaken, Gray thought this, when he spoke of merely descriptive poems. Gray's own stanza, in his "Fragment on Vicissitude," beginning—

Yesterday the sullen year
Saw the snowy whirlwind fly, . . .

perhaps the finest stanza in his poems, is a most striking example of this sublime combination.

I say, that these two admired lyrics of Milton have less of this combination than I could wish: they were written in the buoyancy and joyousness of youth, though the joyousness of the latter is pensive: all was yet hope with the poet; none of the evils of life had yet come upon him: it was the joy of mental display and visionary glory; of a mind proudly displaying its own richness, and throwing from its treasures beams of light on all external objects: but it was the rapidity of a ferment too much in motion to allow it to wait long enough on particular topics; therefore there was in these two productions less intensity than in most of the author's other poetry: he is here generally content to describe the surface of what he notices. His learned allusions abound, though not so much perhaps as in most of his other writings: these, however, are not the proofs of his genius, but only of his memory and industry.

I admit, that the choice of the imagery of these pieces could only have been made by a true poet, of nice discernment and brilliant fancy; of a mind constantly occupied by contemplation, and skilful in making use of all those superstitions in which the visionary delight; and that the whole are woven into one web of congenial associations, which make a beautiful and splendid constellation: still a large portion of the ingredients, taken separately, have been anticipated by other poets.

These remarks will probably draw forth the question, "Whence then has arisen the superior popularity of these two compositions?" I may now be forgiven for asserting, that popularity is a doubtful test of merit. One reason may be, that they are more easily understood; that they are less laboured, and less deep: that they do not try and fatigue, either the heart or the intellect. The mass of the people like slight amusement, and subjects of easy apprehension: the greater part of Milton's poetry is too solemn and thought-working for their taste or their power.

In the sublime bard's latter poems,—in his epics and his drama,—and even in his early monody of 'Lycidas,' his rural images, though not more picturesque nor perhaps except in 'Lycidas,' quite so fresh, yet derive a double force from their position;—from the circumstances of the persons on whom they are represented as acting;—as, for instance, on Adam, Eve, Satan, our Saviour, Samson, and on the mourners for the death of Lycidas.

When the description of scenery forms part of a fable, and is connected with the development of a story, the mind of the reader is already worked up into a state of sensitiveness and sympathy, which confers upon surrounding objects hues of augmented impression.

When Milton recalls to his mind those images with which he had been familiar in the society of his friend Lycidas, they awaken, from the accident of his death, affections and regrets which they never had done before. When Eve is about to be expelled from Paradise, how she grieves over her lost flowers and garden-delights! How the "air of heaven, fresh-blowing," invigorates and charms Samson, when brought out from a close prison! How affecting is the scene in the wilderness, when, after a night of tremendous tempest, our Saviour is cheered by a balmy morning of extreme brilliance!

These are what make fable necessary to constitute the highest poetry. I do not recollect that this has been sufficiently insisted upon by former critics: the want of it is assuredly experienced in Thomson's beautifully descriptive poem of the "Seasons."

L'ALLEGRO.*

HENCE, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born[a],
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding darkness spreads his jealous wings[b],
And the night-raven sings:
There, under ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell[c].
But come, thou goddess fair and free,
In Heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces[d] more,
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore:
Or whether, as some sager sing[e],
The frolick wind, that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying[f];

* These are airs, "that take the prison'd soul, and lap it in Elysium."—HURD.

[a] *Hence, loathed Melancholy,*
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born.

Erebus, not Cerberus, was the legitimate husband of Night. "Tenebræ, miseria, querela, somnia, quos omnes Erebo et Nocte natos ferunt."—Cicero, "de Nat. Deor." b. iii. 17. Milton was too universal a scholar to be unacquainted with this mythology: but as Melancholy is here the creature of Milton's imagination, he had a right to give her what parentage he pleased, and to marry Night, the natural mother of Melancholy, to any ideal husband that would best serve to heighten the allegory.—T. WARTON.

[b] *Jealous wings.*

Alluding to the watch which fowls keep when they are sitting.—WARBURTON.

[c] *In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.*

It should be remembered, that "Cimmeriæ tenebræ" were anciently proverbial. The execration in the text is a translation of a passage in one of his own academic Prolusions:—"Dignus qui Cimmeriis occlusus tenebris longam et perosam vitam transigat." 'Pr. W.' vol. ii. 587.—T. WARTON.

[d] *Two sister Graces.*

Meat and Drink, the two sisters of Mirth.—WARBURTON.

[e] *Some sager sing.*

Because those who give to Mirth such gross companions as Eating and Drinking, are the less sage mythologists.—WARBURTON.

[f] *Zephyr, with Aurora playing,*
As he met her once a-Maying.

The rhymes and imagery are from Jonson, in the Mask at Sir William Cornwallis's house at Highgate, 1604:—

See, who here is come a-Maying:
Why left we off our playing?

This song is sung by Zephyrus and Aurora, Milton's two paramours, and Flora.—T. WARTON.

There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew[g],
Fill'd her with thee a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful jollity;
Quips, and cranks[h], and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles[i],
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it as you go[j],
On the light fantastick toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty[k];
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasures free[l];
To hear the lark begin his flight[m],

[g] *And fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew.*

So Shakspeare, as Mr. Bowle observes, "Tam. Shr." a. ii. s. 1:—

She looks as clear
As morning roses newly wash'd with dew.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Quips, and cranks.*

A "quip" is a satirical joke, a smart repartee. By "cranks," a word yet unexplained, I think we are here to understand cross-purposes, or some other similar conceit of conversation, surprising the company by its intricacy, or embarrassing by its difficulty. Our author has "cranks," which his context explains, 'Pr. W.' i. 165: "To show us the ways of the Lord, straight and faithful as they are, not full of cranks and contradictions."—T. WARTON.

[i] *Wreathed smiles.*

In a smile the features are "wreathed," or curled, twisted, &c.—T. WARTON.

[j] *Come, and trip it as you go, &c.*

An imitation of Shakspeare, "Tempest," a. iv. s. 2. Ariel to the spirits:—

Come, and go,
Each one tripping on his toe.—NEWTON.

[k] *The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty.*

Dr. Newton supposes that Liberty is here called the mountain-nymph, "because the people in mountainous countries have generally preserved their liberties longest, as the Britons formerly in Wales, and the inhabitants in the mountains of Switzerland at this day." Milton's head was not so political on this occasion: warmed with the poetry of the Greeks, I rather believe that he thought of the Oreads of the Grecian mythology, whose wild haunts among the romantic mountains of Pisa are so beautifully described in Homer's "Hymn to Pan." The allusion is general, to inaccessible and uncultivated scenes of nature, such as mountainous situations afford, and which were best adapted to the free and uninterrupted range of the nymph Liberty. He compares Eve to an Oread, certainly without any reference to Wales or the Swiss cantons, in 'Paradise Lost,' b. ix. 387. See also 'El.' v. 127:—

Atque aliquam cupidus prædatur Oreada Faunus.—T. WARTON.

[l] *In unreproved pleasures free.*

That is, blameless, innocent, not subject to reproof. See 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 492.—T. WARTON.

[m] *To hear the lark begin his flight, &c.*

There is a peculiar propriety in "startle:" the lark's is a sudden shrill burst of

And singing, startle the dull night [n],
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow,
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine [o]:
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of Darkness thin [p];
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn [q],
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill;

song. Both in 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' there seem to be two parts; the one a day piece, and the other a night piece. Here, or with three or four of the preceding lines, our author begins to spend the day with mirth.—T. WARTON.

[n] *Startle the dull night.*

So in "King Henry V." a. iv. Chorus:—

Piercing the night's dull ear.—STEEVENS.

[o] *Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,*
Or the twisted eglantine.

Sweet-briar and eglantine are the same plant: by the "twisted eglantine" he therefore means the honeysuckle. All three are plants often growing against the side or walls of a house.—T. WARTON.

[p] *The rear of Darkness thin.*

Darkness is a person above, v. 6: and in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iii. 712: and in Spenser, "Fa. Qu." I. vii. 23:—

Where Darknesse he in deepest dongeon drove.

And in Manilius, i. 126:—

mundumque enixa nitentem,
Fugit in infernas Caligo pulsa tenebras.

But, if we take in the context, he seems to have here personified Darkness from "Romeo and Juliet," a. ii. s. 3:—

The grey-eyed Morn smiles on the frowning night,
Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light;
And flecked Darkness, like a drunkard, reels
From forth day's pathway.

For here too we have by implication Milton's "dappled dawn," v. 44: but more expressly in "Much Ado about Nothing," a. v. s. 3:—

And look, the gentle day
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray.

So also Drummond, "Sonnets," edit. 1616:—

Sith, winter gone, the sunne in dapled skie
Now smiles on meadowes, &c.—T. WARTON.

[q] *Rouse the slumbering morn.*

The same expression, as Mr. Bowle observes, occurs with the same rhymes, in an elegant triplet of an obscure poet, John Habington, "Castara," edit. 1640, p. 8:—

The nymphes with quivers shall adorne
Their active sides, and rouse the morne
With the shrill musicke of the horne.—T. WARTON.

I do not know why Warton calls William Habington, whom he misnames John, "an obscure poet:" he was a very elegant one, and has latterly been again brought into notice and praise.

Milton was here indebted to Guarini, "Pastor Fido," where the "slumbering morn is roused," a. i. s. 1.—TODD.

Some time walking, not unseen [r],
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great sun begins his state [s],
Robed in flames, and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight [t];
While the ploughman near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his sithe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale [u].

[r] *Not unseen.*

In the 'Penseroso,' he walks "unseen," v. 65. Happy men love witnesses of their joy: the splenetic love solitude.—HURD.

[s] *Right against the eastern gate,*
Where the great sun begins his state, &c.

Gray has adopted the first of these lines in his "descent of Odin." See also 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 542. Here is an allusion to a splendid or royal procession. We have the eastern gate again, in the Latin poem 'In Quintum Novembris,' v. 133. Shakspeare has also the eastern gate, which is most poetically opened, "Midsummer Night's Dream," a. iii. s. 9:—

Ev'n till the eastern gate, all fiery red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.—T. WARTON.

[t] *The clouds in thousand liveries dight.*

Literally from a very puerile poetical description of the morning in one of his academic Prolusions:—"Ipsa quoque tellus, in adventum solis, cultiori se induit vestitu; nubesque juxta, variis chlamydatæ coloribus, pompa solenni, longoque ordine, videntur ancillari surgenti Deo." 'Pr. Works,' vol. ii. 586. And just before we have "The cock with lively din," &c.—"At primus omnium adventantem solem triumphat insomnis gallus." An ingenious critic observes, that this morning landscape of 'L'Allegro' has served as a repository of imagery for all succeeding poets on the same subject: but much the same circumstances, among others, are assembled by a poet who wrote above thirty years before, the author of "Britannia's Pastorals," b. iv. s. iv. p. 75. I give the passage at large:—

By this had chanticlere, the village clocke,
Bidden the good wife for her maides to knocke:
And the swart plowman for his breakfast staid,
That he might till those lands were fallow laid:
The hills and valleys here and there resound
With the re-echoes of the deep-mouth'd hound:
Each sheapherd's daughter with her cleanly peale,
Was come afield to milke the mornings meale;
And ere the sunne had clymb'd the easterne hils,
To guild the muttring bournes and petty rills;
Before the laboring bee had left the hiue,
And nimble fishes, which in riuers diue,
Began to leape, and catch the drowned flie,
I rose from rest.—T. WARTON.

[u] *And every shepherd tells his tale*
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

It was suggested to me by the late ingenious Mr. Headly, that the word "tale" does not here imply stories told by shepherds, but that it is a technical term for numbering sheep, which is still used in Yorkshire and the distant counties: This interpretation I am inclined to adopt, which I will therefore endeavour to illustrate and enforce. "Tale" and "tell," in this sense, were not unfamiliar in our poetry, in and about Milton's time: for instance, Dryden's Virgil, Bucol. iii. 33:—

And once she takes the tale of all my lambs.

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures [v],
Whilst the landskip round it measures;
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide:
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees [w],

And in W. Browne's "Shepheard's Pipe," Egl. v. edit. 1614. 12mo. He is describing the dawn of day:—

When the shepheards from the fold
All their bleating charges told;
And, full careful, search'd if one
Of all the flock was hurt, or gone, &c.

But let us analyse the context. The poet is describing a very early period of the morning; and this he describes by selecting and assembling such picturesque objects as accompany that period; and such as were familiar to an early riser. He is waked by the lark, and goes into the fields: the sun is just emerging, and the clouds are still hovering over the mountains: the cocks are crowing, and with their lively notes scatter the lingering remains of darkness: human labours and employments are renewed with the dawn of the day: the hunter (formerly much earlier at his sport than at present) is beating the covert, and the slumbering morn is roused with the cheerful echo of hounds and horns: the mower is whetting his scythe to begin his work: the milk-maid, whose business is of course at daybreak, comes abroad singing: the shepherd opens his fold, and takes the "tale" of his sheep, to see if any were lost in the night, as in the passage just quoted from Browne. Now for shepherds to tell tales, or to sing, is a circumstance trite, common, and general, and belonging only to ideal shepherds; nor do I know, that such shepherds tell tales, or sing, more in the morning than at any other part of the day: a shepherd taking the "tale" of his sheep which are just unfolded, is a new image, correspondent and appropriate, as beautifully descriptive of a period of time, is founded in fact, and is more pleasing as more natural.—T. WARTON.

[v] *Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures.*

There is, in my opinion, great beauty in this abrupt and rapturous start of the poet's imagination, as it is extremely well adapted to the subject, and carries a very pretty allusion to those sudden gleams of vernal delight, which break in upon the mind at the sight of a fine prospect.—THYER.

[w] *Towers and battlements it sees*
Bosom'd high in tufted trees.

This was the great mansion-house in Milton's early days, before the old-fashioned architecture had given way to modern arts and improvements. Turrets and battlements were conspicuous marks of the numerous new buildings of the reign of King Henry VIII., and of some rather more ancient, many of which yet remained in their original state, unchanged and undecayed: nor was that style, in part at least, quite omitted in Inigo Jones's first manner. Browne, in "Britannia's Pastorals," has a similar image, b. I. s. v. p. 96:—

Yond pallace, whose brave turret tops
Ouer the statelie wood suruay the copse.

Browne is a poet now forgotten, but must have been well known to Milton. Where only a little is seen, more is left to the imagination. These symptoms of an old palace, especially when thus disposed, have a greater effect than a discovery of larger parts, and even a full display of the whole edifice. The embosomed battlements, and the spreading top of the tall grove, on which they reflect a reciprocal charm, still farther interest the fancy from the novelty of combination: while just enough of the towering structure is shown to make an accompaniment to the tufted expanse of venerable verdure, and to compose a picturesque association. With respect to their rural residence, there was a coyness in our Gothic ancestors: modern seats are seldom so deeply ambushed: they disclose all

Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes [x].
Hard by, a cottage chimney smoaks
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis, met,
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tann'd haycock in the mead.
Sometimes with secure delight
The upland hamlets [y] will invite,
When the merry bells ring round [z],
And the jocund rebecks sound [a]
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequer'd shade [b];

their glories at once; and never excite expectation by concealment, by gradual approaches, and by interrupted appearances.—T. WARTON.

[x] *Where perhaps some beauty lies,*
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.

Most probably from Burton's "Melancholy," as Peck observes: but in Shakspeare we have "your eyes are lodestarres," "Mids. Night's Dream," a. i. s. 1. And this was no uncommon compliment in Chaucer, Skelton, Sydney, Spenser, and other old English poets, as Mr. Steevens has abundantly proved. Milton enlivens his prospect by this unexpected circumstance, which gives it a moral charm.—T. WARTON.

[y] *The upland hamlets.*

In opposition to the hay-making scene in the lower lands.—THYER.

[z] *When the merry bells ring round.*

See Shakspeare, "Henry IV." P. II. a. iv. s. 4:—

And bid the merry bells ring to thine ear.—T. WARTON.

[a] *And the jocund rebecks sound.*

The rebeck was a species of fiddle; and is, I believe, the same that is called in Chaucer, Lydgate, and the old French writers, the rebible. It appears from Sylvester's "Du Bartas" that the cymbal was furnished with wires, and the rebeck with strings of catgut, ed. 1621, p. 221. "But wyerie cymbals, rebecks sinewes twined." Du Cange quotes a middle-aged barbarous Latin poet, who mentions many musical instruments by names now hardly intelligible:—"Gloss. Lat. v. Baudosa." One of them is the rebeck. "Quidam rebeccam arcuabant:" where by *arcuabant*, we are to understand that it was played upon by a bow, *arcus*. The word occurs in Drayton's "Eclogues," vol. iv. p. 1391:—"He tuned his rebeck to a mournful note." And see our author's 'Liberty of Unlicensed Printing:'—

"The villages also must have their visitors to enquire, what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck reads even to the gammuth of every municiple [town] fidler," &c. If, as I have supposed, it is Chaucer's "ribible," the diminutive of "rebibe" used also by Chaucer, I must agree with Sir John Hawkins, that it originally comes from "rebeb," the name of a Moorish musical instrument with two strings played on by a bow. Sir John adds, that the Moors brought it into Spain, whence it passed into Italy, and obtained the appellation of *ribeca*. "Hist. Mus." ii. 86. Perhaps we have it from the French *rebec* and *rebecquin*. In the Percy household book, 1512, are recited "mynstralls in household iij, viz., a tabarett, a luyte, and a rebecc." It appears below Queen Elizabeth's reign in the music establishment of the royal household.—T. WARTON.

[b] *Chequer'd shade.*

So, in "Titus Andronic." a. ii. s. 3:—

The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,
And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground.—RICHARDSON.

And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail[c]:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale[d],
With stories told of many a feat,
How faery Mab the junkets eat:
She was pinch'd and pull'd, she sed[e];
And he, by friar's lantern led[f],
Tells how the drudging goblin swet,
To earn his cream-bowl duly set[g],
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath thresh'd the corn,
That ten day-labourers could not end:
Then lies him down the lubbar fiend,
And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lull'd asleep.
Tower'd cities please us then[h],
And the busy hum of men,

[c] *Till the livelong daylight fail.*

Here the poet begins to pass the night with mirth; and he begins with the night or evening of the "sunshine holiday," whose merriments he has just celebrated.—T. WARTON.

[d] *Then to the spicy nut-brown ale.*

This was Shakspeare's "gossip's bowl,"—"Midsummer Night's Dream," a. i. s. 1. The composition was ale, nutmeg, sugar, toast, and roasted crabs, or apples: it was called lamb's wool. Our old dramas have frequent allusions to this delectable beverage. In Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess" it is styled "the spiced wassel-boul."—T. WARTON.

[e] *She was pinch'd and pull'd, she sed, &c.*

"He" and "she" are persons of the company assembled to spend the evening, after a country wake, at a rural junket: all this is a part of the pastoral imagery which now prevailed in our poetry.—T. WARTON.

[f] *And he, by friar's lantern led, &c.*

"Friar's lantern," is the Jack-and-lantern, which led people in the night into marshes and waters. Milton gives the philosophy of this superstition, 'Paradise Lost,' b. ix. 634-642. In the midst of a solemn and learned enarration, his strong imagination could not resist a romantic tradition consecrated by popular credulity.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Tells how the drudging goblin swet,*
To earn his cream-bowl duly set, &c.

This goblin is Robin Goodfellow. His cream-bowl was earned, and he paid the punctuality of those by whom it was duly placed for his refection, by the service of threshing with his invisible fairy flail, in one night, and before the dawn of day, a quantity of corn in the barn, which could not have been threshed in so short a time by ten labourers. He then returns into the house, fatigued with his task; and overcharged with his reward of the cream-bowl, throws himself before the fire, and, stretched along the whole breadth of the fire-place, basks till the morning.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Tower'd cities please us then.*

"Then," that is at night. The poet returns from his digression, perhaps disproportionately prolix, concerning the feats of fairies and goblins, which protract the conversation over the spicy bowl of a village supper, to enumerate other pleasures or amusements of the night or evening. "Then" is in this line a repetition of the first "Then," ver. 100.

Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold[i],
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear[j],
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With masque and antique pageantry[k];
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on[l];
Or sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild[m].

Afterwards, we have another "Then," with the same sense and reference, ver. 131 Here too is a transition from mirth in the country to mirth in the city.—T. WARTON

[i] *In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold.*

By "triumphs" we are to understand, shows, such as masks, revels, &c., and here, that is in these exhibitions, there was a rich display of the most splendid dresses, of the "weeds of peace." See 'Samson Agonistes,' v. 1312.—T. WARTON.

[j] *There let Hymen oft appear*
In saffron robe, with taper clear, &c.

For, according to Shakspeare, "Love's Labour's Lost," a. iv. s. 3:—

Revels, dances, masks, and merry hours,
Forerun fair Love, strewing her way with flowers.

Among these triumphs, were the masks, pageantries, spectacles, and revelries, exhibited with great splendour, and a waste of allegoric invention, at the nuptials of noble personages. Here, of course, the classical Hymen was introduced as an actor, properly habited, and distinguished by his characteristic symbols.—T. WARTON.

[k] *And pomp, and feast, and revelry,*
With masque, and antique pageantry.

The revels, according to Minsheu, were "sports of dauncing, masking, comedies, tragedies, and such like, used in the king's house, the houses of court, or of other great personages." The "antique pageants" were, at first, merely processions and emblematic spectacles at the public reception of distinguished personages. See Warton's "Hist. of Eng. Poetry," vol. ii. 204. They were afterwards distinguished by speaking characters. From these the poet proceeds to the "well-trod stage;" on which expression Mr. Warton remarks that Milton had not yet gone such extravagant lengths in puritanism, as to join with his reforming brethren in condemning the stage.—TODD.

[l] *If Jonson's learned sock be on.*

This expression occurs in Jonson's recommendatory verses, prefixed to the first folio edition of Shakspeare's plays in 1623:—

Or when thy socks were on.—T. WARTON.

[m] *Or sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,*
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

There is good reason to suppose, that Milton threw many additions and corrections into the "Theatrum Poetarum," a book published by his nephew Edward Phillips, in 1675: it contains criticisms far above the taste of that period: among these is the following judgment on Shakspeare, which was not then, I believe, the general opinion, and which perfectly coincides both with the sentiment and words of the text:—"In tragedy, never any expressed a more lofty and tragic highth, never any represented nature more purely to the life; and where the polishments of art are

And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse;
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes, with many a winding bout [n]
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning [o];
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony [p];
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heap'd Elysian flowers [q], and hear
Such strains, as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regain'd Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

most wanting, as probably his learning was not extraordinary, he pleases with a certain wild and native elegance," &c. "Mod. Poets," p. 194.—T. Warton.

Milton shows his judgment here in celebrating Shakspeare's comedies, rather than his tragedies: but for models of the latter, he refers us rightly, in his 'Penseroso,' to the Grecian scene, ver. 97.—Hurd.

The present editor reprinted Phillips's "Theatrum," as far as concerned the English poets, in 1800, and again at Geneva, in 1824.

[n] *Bout.*

"Bout" is a fold or twist, and often used in this sense by Spenser. See "Faer. Qu." i. xi. 3.—Todd.

[o] *With wanton heed and giddy cunning.*

"Cunning" is used in the same sense, in our translation of the Psalms:—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning," Ps. cxxxvii. 5. Which Sandys rightly paraphrases:—"Let my fingers their melodious skill forget," Ps. ed. 1648, p. 210.—Todd.

[p] *The melting voice through mazes running,*
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony.

Mr. Malone thinks that Milton has here copied Marston's comedy, "What you Will," 1607. Suppl. Shaks. vol. i. 588.—

Cannot your trembling wires throw a chain
Of powerful rapture 'bout our mazed sense?

But the poet is not displaying the effect of music on the senses, but of a skilful musician on music. Milton's meaning is not, that the senses are enchained or amazed by music; but that, as the voice of the singer runs through the manifold mazes or intricacies of sound, all the chains are untwisted which imprison and entangle the hidden soul, the essence or perfection of harmony. In common sense, let music be made to show all, even her most hidden powers.—T. Warton.

[q] *Of heap'd Elysian flowers.*

See 'Paradise Lost,' b. iii. 359. Mr. Warton adds, that Milton's florid style has this distinction from that of most other poets; that it is marked with a degree of dignity. Pope has borrowed Milton's "Elysian flowers," in his "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day."—Todd.

IL PENSEROSO.

HENCE, vain deluding Joys[a],
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick[b] and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams;
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners[c] of Morpheus' train.
But hail, thou goddess, sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister[d] might beseem,

[a] *Hence, vain deluding Joys, &c.*

The opening of this poem is formed from a distich in Sylvester, the translator of "Du Bartas," p. 1084:—

Hence, hence, false pleasures, momentary joyes!
Mocke us no more with your illuding toyes!—BOWLE.

[b] *As thick, &c.*

This imagery is immediately from Sylvester's Cave of Sleep in "Du Bartas," p. 316, edit. fol. 1621. He there mentions Morpheus, and speaks of his "fantasticke swarms of dreames that hovered," and swarms of dreams

Green, red, and yellow, tawney, black and blew:

and these resemble

The unnumbered moats which in the sun do play.

And these dreams, from their various colours, are afterwards called the "gawdy swarme of dreames." Hence Milton's "fancies fond," "gaudy shapes," "numberless gay motes in the sun-beams," and the "hovering dreams of Morpheus."—T. WARTON.

[c] *The fickle pensioners, &c.*

"Fickle" is transitory, perpetually shifting, &c. "Pensioners" became a common appellation in our poetry, for train, attendants, retinue, &c. As in the "Mids. Night's Dream," a. ii. s. 1, of the faery queen:—

The cowslips tall her pensioners be.

This was in consequence of Queen Elizabeth's fashionable establishment of a band of military courtiers by that name. They were some of the handsomest and tallest young men, of the best families and fortune, that could be found: they gave the mode in dress and diversions: they accompanied the queen in her progress to Cambridge, where they held torches at a play on a Sunday in King's College chapel.—T. WARTON.

[d] *Prince Memnon's sister.*

This is, an Ethiopian princess, or sable beauty. Memnon, king of Ethiopia, being an auxiliary of the Trojans, was slain by Achilles. See Virg. Æn. i. 493. "Nigri Memnonis arma." It does not however appear that Memnon had any sister. Tithonus, according to Hesiod, had by Aurora only two sons, Memnon and Emathion, "Theog." 984. This lady is a creation of the poet.—DUNSTER.

Or that starr'd Ethiop queen[e] that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended:
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta, long of yore,
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she[f]; in Saturn's reign,
Such mixture was not held a stain:
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
  Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestick train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn[g],
Over thy decent shoulders[h] drawn,
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait;
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble[i], till

[e] *Or that starr'd Ethiop queen.*

Cassiope, as we learn from Apollodorus, was the wife of Cepheus, king of Ethiopia: she boasted herself to be more beautiful than the Nereids, and challenged them to a trial: who, in revenge, persuaded Neptune to send a prodigious whale into Ethiopia. To appease them, she was directed to expose her daughter Andromeda to the monster: but Perseus delivered Andromeda, of whom he was enamoured, and transported Cassiope into heaven, where she became a constellation. Hence she is called "that starr'd Ethiop queen." See Aratus, "Phænom." v. 189, seq. But Milton seems to have been struck with an old Gothic print of the constellations, which I have seen in early editions of the astronomers, where this queen is represented with a black body marked with white stars.—T. WARTON.

[f] *His daughter she.*

The meaning of Milton's allegory is, that Melancholy is the daughter of Genius, which is typified by the "bright-hair'd" goddess of the eternal fire. Saturn, the father, is the god of saturnine dispositions, of pensive and gloomy minds.—T. WARTON.

[g] *And sable stole of cypress lawn.*

Here is a character and propriety in the use of the stole, which in the poetical phraseology of the present day, is not only perpetually misapplied, but misrepresented. It was a veil which covered the head and shoulders; and, as Mr. Bowle observes, was worn only by such of the Roman matrons as were distinguished for the strictness of their modesty.

Cypress is a thin transparent texture.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Decent shoulders.*

Not exposed, therefore decent; more especially, as so covered.—T. WARTON.

[i] *Forget thyself to marble.*

It is the same sort of petrifaction in our author's epitaph on Shakspeare:—

> There thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
> Dost make us marble by too much conceiving.

In both instances excess of thought is the cause.—T. WARTON.

With a sad leaden downward cast[j]
Thou fix them on the earth as fast:
And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing.
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens[k] takes his pleasure:
But first and chiefest with thee bring,
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The cherub Contemplation[l];
And the mute Silence hist along[m],
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke,
Gently o'er the accustom'd oak:
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy[n]!

[j] *With a sad leaden downward cast.*

Hence, says Mr. Warton, Gray's expressive phraseology, of the same personage, in his "Hymn to Adversity:"—

With leaden eye that loves the ground.—TODD.

[k] *Trim gardens.*

Mr. Warton here observes, that affectation and false elegance were now carried to the most elaborate and absurd excess in gardening; and he notices, among similar monuments of extravagance in other countries, "the garden at Hampton-court, where in privet are figured various animals, the royal arms of England, and many other things." The *architecture du jardinage*, he thinks, may be also discovered in the "spruce-spring," the "cedarn-alleys," the "crisped shades and bowers," in 'Comus:' and the "trim garden" in 'Arcades,' v. 46.—TODD.

[l] *Him that yon soars on golden wing*
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The cherub Contemplation.

By contemplation, is here meant that stretch of thought, by which the mind ascends to the first good, first perfect, and first fair; and is therefore very properly said to "soar on golden wing, guiding the fiery-wheeled throne:" that is, to take a high and glorious flight, carrying bright ideas of Deity along with it. But the whole imagery alludes to the cherubic forms that conveyed the fiery-wheeled car in Ezekiel x. 2, *seq.* See also Milton himself, 'Par. Lost,' b. vi. 750: so that nothing can be greater or juster than this idea of "divine Contemplation." Contemplation, of a more sedate turn, and intent only on human things, is more fitly described, as by Spenser, under the figure of an old man; time and experience qualifying men best for this office. Spenser might then be right in his imagery, and yet Milton might be right in his, without being supposed to ramble after some fanciful Italian.—HURD.

[m] *And the mute Silence hist along.*

I always admired this and the seventeen following lines with excessive delight. There is a spell in it, which goes far beyond mere description: it is the very perfection of ideal, and picturesque, and contemplative poetry.

[n] *Most musical, most melancholy.*

'L'Allegro' began with the morning of the day, and the lively salutations of the lark: 'Il Penseroso,' with equal propriety, after a general exordium, opens with the night; with moonshine, and the melancholy music of the nightingale.—T. WARTON.

Thee, chauntress, oft, the woods among,
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way;
And oft [o], as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfeu sound,
Over some wide-water'd shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar [p]:
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removed place will fit [q],
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm [r].
Or let my lamp at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower [s],
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere

[o] *And oft, &c.*

Here follows a description at once poetically picturesque, and strictly natural; the moon having that appearance of positive descent, as the kind of clouds here described break and disperse around her.—DUNSTER.

[p] *With sullen roar.*

This finely descriptive epithet is adopted from the "sullen bell" in Shakspeare's "King Henry IV.," P. II., or "the surly sullen bell" in his seventy-first Sonnet.—TODD.

Observe that the toll of bells always comes across a spreading water with extraordinary melancholy. Thus I have been long accustomed to listen to it across the lake of Geneva with deep emotion. This mention of the curfeu is much finer even than the noble line which opens Gray's "Elegy," though that has always been so justly admired.

[q] *Some still removed place will fit.*

That is, "some quiet, remote, or unfrequented place will suit my purpose." "Removed," is the ancient English participle passive for the Latin *remote*.—T. WARTON.

[r] *Or the bellman's drowsy charm,*
To bless the doors from nightly harm.

Anciently the watchman, who cried the hours, used sundry benedictions.—T. WARTON.

[s] *Be seen in some high lonely tower.*

The extraneous circumstance "be seen," gives poetry to a passage, the simple sense of which is only, "Let me study at midnight by a lamp in a lofty tower." Hence a picture is created which strikes the imagination.—T. WARTON.

This is one of those happy observations so characteristic of Thomas Warton. When the midnight wanderer sees through the dark a distant light in a high tower, it much engages his eye, and moves his imagination, if he has any mind and sensitiveness: and this application of mind to the description of scenery is what alone gives it the force of a high order of poetry.

The spirit of Plato[t], to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
And of those demons[u] that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometimes let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by[v],
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine;
Or what, though rare[w], of later age
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.
But, O, sad Virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower!
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing[x]
Such notes, as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek!
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold[y],
Of Camball and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,

[t] *The spirit of Plato.*

This shows what sort of contemplation he was most fond of. Milton's imagination made him as much a mystic as his good sense would give leave.—HURD.

[u] *And of those demons, &c.*

Undoubtedly these notions are from Plato's "Timæus" and "Phædon," and the reveries of his old commentators; yet with some reference to the Gothic system of demons, which is a mixture of Platonism, school-divinity, and Christian superstition.—T. WARTON.

[v] *Sometimes let gorgeous Tragedy*
In sceptred pall come sweeping by.

"By "sceptred pall," Dr. Newton understands the *palla honesta* of Horace, "Art. Poet." v. 278. But Horace, I humbly apprehend, only means that Æschylus introduced masks and better dresses. *Palla honesta* is simply a "decent robe." Milton means something more: by clothing Tragedy in her "sceptred pall," he intended specifically to point our regal stories as the proper arguments of the higher drama: and this more expressly appears, from the subjects immediately mentioned in the subsequent couplet.—T. WARTON.

[w] *Though rare.*

Just glancing at Shakspeare.—HURD.

[x] *Might raise Musæus from his bower!*
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing, &c.

Musæus and Orpheus are mentioned together in Plato's "Republic," as two of the genuine Greek poets. To Orpheus or his harp our author has frequent allusions.—T. WARTON.

[y] *Or call up him that left half-told*
The story of Cambuscan bold, &c.

Hence it appears, that Milton, among Chaucer's pieces, was most struck with his "Squire's Tale:" it best suited our author's predilection for romantic poetry. Chaucer is here ranked with the sublime poets: his comic vein is forgotten and overlooked.—T. WARTON.

That own'd the virtuous ring and glass;
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
On which the Tartar king did ride:
And if aught else great bards beside[z]
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung;
Of forests and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear[a].
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career[b],
Till civil-suited Morn appear[c],
Not trick'd and frounced[d] as she was wont
With the Attick boy to hunt,
But kercheft[e] in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd[f] with a shower still[g],
When the gust hath blown his fill,

[z] *And if aught else great bards beside, &c.*

From Chaucer, the father of English poetry, and who is here distinguished by a story remarkable for the wildness of its invention, our author seems to make a very pertinent and natural transition to Spenser; whose "Faery Queene," although it externally professes to treat of tournaments and the trophies of knightly valour, of fictitious forests and terrific enchantments, is yet allegorical, and contains a remote meaning concealed under the veil of a fabulous action, and of a typical narrative, which is not immediately perceived. Spenser sings in "sage and solemn tunes," with respect to his morality, and the dignity of his stanza. In the mean time, it is to be remembered, that there were other "great bards," and of the romantic class, who sung in such tunes, and who "mean more than meets the ear." Both Tasso and Ariosto pretend to an allegorical and mysterious meaning: and Tasso's enchanted forest, the most conspicuous fiction of the kind, might have been here intended. One is surprised that Milton should have delighted in romances: the images of feudal and royal life which those books afford, agreed not at all with his system.—T. WARTON.

[a] *Where more is meant than meets the ear.*

Seneca, Epist. 114:—"In quibus plus intelligendum est quam audiendum."—BOWLE.

[b] *Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career.*

Hitherto we have seen the night of the melancholy man: here his day commences: accordingly, this second part or division of the poem is ushered in with a long verse.—T. WARTON.

[c] *Till civil-suited Morn appear.*

Plainly from Shakspeare, as Dr. Newton and Mr. Bowle have separately observed, "Romeo and Juliet," a. iii. s. 4:—

Come, civil Night,
Thou sober-suited matron, all in black.

Where "civil" is grave, decent, solemn.—T. WARTON.

[d] *Not trick'd and frounced.*

The meaning of "frounced" seems most commonly to signify an excessive or affected dressing of the hair: it is from the French *froncer*, to curl.—T. WARTON.

"Trick'd" also should be explained, which means dressed out.—TODD.

[e] *Kercheft.*

Wrapped up as with a handkerchief.—DUNSTER.

[f] *Or usher'd, &c.*

Dr. Johnson, from this to the 154th verse inclusively, thus abridges our author's ideas:—"When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackless woods, falls asleep by some murmuring water, and, with melancholy enthusiasm, expects some dream of prognostication, or some music played by aërial performers." Never were fine imagery and fine imagination so marred, mutilated, and impoverished by a cold, unfeeling and imperfect representation! To say nothing, that he confounds two descriptions.—T. WARTON.

Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves[h].
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, goddess, bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe, with heaved stroke,
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye[i],
While the bee[j] with honied thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;
And let some strange mysterious Dream[k]
Wave at his wings in aery stream

If he had gone out in a morning of rain and wind, and laid himself down by some murmuring stream, he would have subjected himself to that modern plague, the cholera: but the poet says that it was not till "the sun began to fling his flaring beams," that he went forth to groves and sylvan scenery. Thus it is that Johnson is commonly vague, and full of pompous and empty sounds, when he attempts to describe; yet on such loose descriptions have his fond eulogists given him credit for poetical imagination. Warton saw this with disgust, and here speaks out. How often must the nice and exquisite classical scholarship of this accomplished and genuine critic have been revolted by the rude pedant's coarse and unfeeling pomposity!

[g] *Still.*

i. e. gentle, as this word was once commonly understood.—TODD.

[h] *With minute drops from off the eaves.*

A natural little circumstance, calculated to impress a pleasing melancholy: and which reminds one of a similar image in a poet who abounds in natural little circumstances. Speaking of a gentle spring-shower, "'Tis scarce to patter heard," says Thomson, "Spring," ver. 176.—JOS. WARTON.

He means, by "minute drops from off the eaves," not small drops, but minute drops, such as drop at intervals, by minutes, for the shower was now over: as we say, minute guns, and minute bells. In 'L'Allegro,' the lark bade good-morrow at the poet's window, through sweet-briars, honey-suckles, and vines, spreading, as we have seen, over the walls of the house: now, their leaves are dropping-wet with a morning-shower.—T. WARTON.

[i] *Day's garish eye.*

The "garish eye" is the glaring eye of Day. So, in "Rom. and Jul." a. iii. s. 4, as Dr. Newton has observed, "the garish sun." It is a favourite word with Drayton, who applies it, in the sense of fine, gaudy, to "fields," in his "Owle," 1604; and to "flowers," in his "Nymph." v. 1630; whence perhaps "the garish columbine" of Milton.—TODD.

[j] *While the bee, &c.*

So Virgil, Ecl. i. 56:—

Hyblæis apibus florem depasta salicti
Sæpe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro.

On the hill Hymettus, the haunt of learning, the bee is made to invite to meditation, with great elegance and propriety, 'Paradise Regained,' iv. 247, &c. Compare also Drayton's "Owle," 1604.—T. WARTON.

Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid:
And, as I wake, sweet musick breathe
Above, about, or underneath[l],
Sent by some Spirit to Mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloysters pale[m],
And love the high-embowed[n] roof,
With antick pillars massy proof,
And storied[o] windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light:

[k] *And let some strange mysterious Dream, &c.*

I do not exactly understand the whole of the context. Is the Dream to wave at Sleep's wings? Dr. Newton will have "wave" to be a verb neuter; and very justly, as the passage now stands. But let us strike out "at," and make "wave" active:—

Let some strange mysterious Dream
Wave his wings, in aery stream, &c.

"Let some fantastic Dream put the wings of Sleep in motion, which shall be displayed, or expanded, in an airy or soft stream of visionary imagery, gently falling or settling on my eyelids." Or "his" may refer to Dream, and not to Sleep, with much the same sense.—T. WARTON.

There seems to me no difficulty in the passage. "Wave" is here, as Newton says, a verb neuter. The dream is to wave at the wings of Sleep, in a "display of lively portraiture."

[l] *And, as I wake, sweet musick breathe*
Above, about, or underneath.

This wonderful music, particularly the subterraneous, proceeding from an invisible cause, and whispered to the pious ear alone by some guardian spirit or the genius of the wood, was probably suggested to Milton's imagination by some of the machineries of the Masks under the contrivance of Inigo Jones.—T. WARTON.

[m] *Cloysters pale.*

Perhaps "the studious cloyster's pale." *Pale*, enclosure. Milton is fond of the singular number. In the next line follows, as in apposition, "the high embowed roof."—T. WARTON.

I believe this passage is seldom printed so as to convey the meaning of the poet, viz. the pale or enclosure of the cloister.—DUNSTER.

Dr. Symmons, in his account of Milton's Life, violently objects to this interpretation, which he considers to be very tame and unpoetical.—TODD.

I believe "pale" to be an adjective, and to mean sombre.

The reader is apt to suppose that Milton's allusion is to the cloisters of St. Paul's cathedral, which his feet might duly and daily pace, when a scholar of the celebrated school adjacent. The said cloisters were the boast of the country, as we learn from Stowe's "Survey of London," 4to. 1598, p. 264:—"About this cloyster was artificially and richly painted the Dance of Machabray, or Dance of Death, commonly called the Dance of St. Paul's; the like whereof was painted about St. Innocent's cloyster at Paris. The metres or poesie of this daunce were translated out of French into English by John Lidgate, monk of Bury, and with the picture of Death leading all estates, painted round the cloister."

But we are obliged to dispel so pleasing a delusion:—"In the year 1549, on the 10th of April, the chapel of Becket, by commandment of the Duke of Somerset, was begun to be pulled down, with the whole cloister, the Daunce of Death, the tombs and monuments; so that nothing thereof was left but the bare plot of ground, which is since converted (says Stowe) into a garden for the petty canons." So that the "cloister's pale," i. e. boundary, only was still to be traversed in Milton's time.

We learn from Hume, that this desecration was to supply stones for the erection of the protector's palace in the Strand, called Somerset-house. (Hist. anno 1549.) It was fearfully expiated in 1552.—J. B.

[n] *High-embowed.*

Highly-vaulted, *arcuatus*, arched.—TODD.

There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage [p],
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew [q];
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetick strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

[o] *Storied.*

Storied, or painted with stories, that is, histories. In barbarous latinity, *storia* is sometimes used for *historia*. One of the arguments used by the Puritans for breaking the painted glass in church windows, was because, by darkening the church, it obscured the new light of the gospel.—T. WARTON.

[p] *And may at last my weary age*
Find out the peaceful hermitage.

It should be remarked, that Milton wishes to die in the character of the melancholy man.—T. WARTON.

[q] *And every herb that sips the dew.*

It seems probable that Milton was a student in botany; for he speaks with great pleasure of the hopes he had formed of being assisted in this study by his friend Charles Deodate, who was a physician. See 'Epitaph. Damon.' v. 150.—T. WARTON.

Of 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,' I believe, opinion is uniform; every man that reads them, reads them with pleasure. The author's design is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to show how objects derive their colours from the mind, by representing the operation of the same things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the same man as he is differently disposed; but rather how, among the successive variety of appearances, every disposition of mind takes hold on those by which it may be gratified.

The cheerful man hears the lark in the morning; the pensive man hears the nightingale in the evening: the cheerful man sees the cock strut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks, "not unseen," to observe the glory of the rising sun, or listen to the singing milk-maid, and view the labours of the ploughman and the mower; then casts his eyes about him over scenes of smiling plenty, and looks up to the distant tower, the residence of some fair inhabitant: thus he pursues rural gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himself at night with the fanciful narratives of superstitious ignorance. The pensive man, at one time, walks "unseen" to muse at midnight; and, at another, hears the solemn curfew: if the weather drives him home, he sits in a room lighted only by "glowing embers;" or by a lonely lamp outwatches the north star, to discover the habitation of separate souls; and varies the shades of meditation, by contemplating the magnificent or pathetic scenes of tragic and epic poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he falls asleep by some murmuring water, and with melancholy enthusiasm expects some dream of prognostication, or some music played by aërial performers.

Both Mirth and Melancholy are solitary, silent inhabitants of the breast, that neither receive nor transmit communication; no mention is therefore made of a philosophical friend, or of a pleasant companion. The seriousness does not arise from any participation of calamity, nor the gaiety from the pleasures of the bottle. The man of cheerfulness, having exhausted the country, tries what "tower'd cities" will afford, and mingles with scenes of splendour, gay assemblies, and nuptial festivities; but he mingles a mere

spectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonson or the wild dramas of Shakspeare are exhibited, he attends the theatre; the pensive man never loses himself in crowds, but walks the cloister, or frequents the cathedral. Milton probably had not yet forsaken the church.

Both his characters delight in music; but he seems to think that cheerful notes would have obtained from Pluto a complete dismission of Eurydice; of whom solemn sounds procured only a conditional release. For the old age of Cheerfulness he makes no provision; but Melancholy he conducts with great dignity to the close of life: his cheerfulness is without levity, and his pensiveness without asperity. Through these two poems the images are properly selected, and nicely distinguished; but the colours of the diction seem not sufficiently discriminated; I know not whether the characters are kept sufficiently apart: no mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination.—JOHNSON.

Of these two exquisite little poems, I think it clear that the last is the most taking; which is owing to the subject. The mind delights most in these solemn images, and a genius delights most to paint them.—HURD.

'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' may be called the two first descriptive poems in the English language: it is perhaps true, that the characters are not sufficiently kept apart; but this circumstance has been productive of greater excellences. It has been remarked, "No mirth indeed can be found in his melancholy, but I am afraid I always meet some melancholy in his mirth." Milton's is the dignity of mirth: his cheerfulness is the cheerfulness of gravity: the objects he selects in his 'L'Allegro' are so far gay, as they do not naturally excite sadness: laughter and jollity are named only as personifications, and never exemplified: "Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles," are enumerated only in general terms. There is specifically no mirth in contemplating a fine landscape; and even his landscape, although it has flowery meads and flocks, wears a shade of pensiveness; and contains "russet lawns," "fallows gray," and "barren mountains," overhung with "labouring clouds;" its old turreted mansion, peeping from the trees, awakens only a train of solemn and romantic, perhaps melancholy reflection. Many a pensive man listens with delight to the "milkmaid singing blithe," to the "mower whetting his scythe," and to a distant peal of village-bells. He chose such illustrations as minister matter for new poetry and genuine description: even his most brilliant imagery is mellowed with the sober hues of philosophic meditation. It was impossible for the author of 'Il Penseroso' to be more cheerful, or to paint mirth with levity: that is, otherwise than in the colours of the higher poetry. Both poems are the result of the same feelings, and the same habits of thought.

Dr. Johnson has remarked, that, in 'L'Allegro,' "no part of the gaiety is made to arise from the pleasures of the bottle." The truth is, that Milton means to describe the cheerfulness of the philosopher or the student, the amusements of a contemplative mind; and on this principle he seems unwilling to allow that Mirth is the offspring of Bacchus and Venus, deities who preside over sensual gratifications; but rather adopts the fiction of those more serious and sapient fablers, who suppose that her proper parents are Zephyr and Aurora; intimating, that his cheerful enjoyments are those of the temperate and innocent kind, of early hours and rural pleasures. That critic does not appear to have entered into the spirit, or to have comprehended the meaning, of our author's 'L'Allegro.'

No man was ever so disqualified to turn Puritan as Milton: in both these poems, he professes himself to be highly pleased with the choral church-music, with Gothic cloisters, the painted windows and vaulted aisles of a venerable cathedral, with tilts and tournaments, and with masques and pageantries. What very repugnant and unpoetical principles did he afterwards adopt! He helped to subvert monarchy, to destroy subordination, and to level all distinctions of rank: but this scheme was totally inconsistent with the splendours of society, with "throngs of knights and barons bold," with "store of ladies," and "high triumphs," which belonged to a court. "Pomp, and feast, and revelry," the show of Hymen, "with mask and antique pageantry," were among the state and trappings of nobility, which, as an advocate for republicanism, he detested: his system of worship, which renounced all outward solemnity, all that had ever any connexion with popery, tended to overthrow the "studious cloisters pale," and the "high-embowed roof;" to remove the "storied windows richly dight," and to silence the "pealing organ" and the "full-voiced quire." The delights arising from these objects were to be sacrificed to the cold and philosophical spirit of Calvinism, which furnished no pleasures to the imagination.—T. WARTON.

SONNETS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The form of the sonnet was invented by the Italians. I have given an opinion of this sort of composition, and of the nature and degree of Milton's merit in this department, in my Life of the poet. Some of these twenty-three short compositions may not perhaps be above mediocrity: some of them are vigorous, and concordant with the stern portion of the poet's genius: the major part appear to have been written when he was not in a poetical mood, but occupied with harsher studies.

The seventh Sonnet, 'On being arrived to the age of twenty-three' (1634), is very fine: it is pre-eminently interesting, as an early development of his own innate character, vowed to great undertakings, and grieved that his virtuous and sublime ambition had yet advanced no step in its own accomplishment. Here the language is simple, chaste, and smooth, and the numbers are not unmelodious.

The next, 'When the Assault was intended to the City' (1642), shows that the poet had now conceived that firm opinion of his own genius and worth which never afterwards deserted him: he puts himself upon a par with Pindar and Euripides. Warton and Todd consider it one of Milton's best Sonnets: I do not exactly accede to that opinion.

There is more of poetical expression in the next, 'To a virtuous young Lady.'

The tenth, 'To the Lady Margaret Ley,' daughter of James Ley, Earl of Marlborough, Lord President of the Council, has only that sort of merit which is derived from the just consciousness of the bard that his very mention of another with praise would confer immortality on that person.

The next Sonnet, on his own book, called 'Tetrachordon,' written in a vein of ridicule, is not worthy of much notice: but the twelfth, on the same subject, has some fine lines on the distinction between liberty and licentiousness.

The praise of Henry Lawes, in the thirteenth Sonnet, draws its principal value from the fame of the panegyrist, and the interest we take in knowing the opinion of great men regarding those of their contemporaries, whose celebrity has passed down to our own times.

Several of the lines 'On the Memory of Mrs. Catharine Thomson,' are poetical, beautiful, and affecting.

The fifteenth, 'To the Lord General Fairfax,' is generally and properly admired, as powerful, majestic, and historically valuable: it has a loftiness of sentiment and tone becoming the bold and enlightened bard.

The sixteenth Sonnet, 'To Cromwell,' is the most nervous of all. Many will doubt whether Cromwell deserved these praises; but Milton's praise seems to have been sincere. The images and expressions are for the most part dignified, grand, and poetical: but Warton truly observes that the close is an anticlimax.

The Sonnet which follows, 'To Sir Henry Vane, the younger,' is somewhat prosaic, involved, and harsh, though it has a rude strength. The character of Vane remains to this day somewhat doubtful: Warton's character of him is discriminative and sagacious.

The eighteenth Sonnet, 'On the late Massacre in Piemont' (1655), is full of pathos, noble sentiment, and grand imagery; but the subject is almost too extensive for a sonnet.

The Sonnet 'On his Blindness' is to my taste next in interest to that 'On arriving to his twenty-third Year:' the sentiments and expressions are in all respects Miltonic.

Of the next, 'To Mr. Lawrence,' it has been truly observed, that it is perfectly Horatian. Lawrence was ancestor to the late Judge Lawrence, of the King's Bench.

The twenty-first, 'To Cyriack Skinner,' is of the same character.

The next, 'To the Same,' is of a higher tone: he here speaks of his blindness, and his fortitude under it.

The twenty-third, and last, is 'On his deceased wife,' his second wife, the daughter of Captain Woodcock, about 1656: it is in the form of a vision, and is very poetical and plaintive.

As to the Italian Sonnets, which follow the first, they have received the praises of the critics of that poetical country. Another English poet has latterly distinguished himself still more in the same way, Mr. Mathias, who resided the last twenty years at Naples, and died there in August, or the end of July, 1835.*

I must confess that more poetry might have been introduced into these Sonnets than our immortal bard has effected: I think that they are not equal in sublimity to Dante; and certainly have little similitude to the tenderness, harmony, and soft and plaintive imagery of Petrarch. Indeed our language will scarcely admit the softness of the Italian tones; but Wordsworth has shown what rich and harmonious poetry the legitimate sonnet will admit even in our language; and the late lamented Mrs. Hemans has done the same, though in a different style. Charlotte Smith's Sonnets excel in a soft melancholy; and T. Warton's are rich in description, and classical in expression†.

But Dyer's collection will prove that there are many good sonnets by several modern authors, as Edwards, Bamfylde, Bowles, Kirke White, Leyden: but one I must especially quote; because it is by the last editor of Milton's poems, the Rev. John Mitford, of Benhall, in Suffolk; a man of great genius, great learning, and great taste, and an excellent prose writer as well as poet. It comes from a note to his "Life of Milton," p. xix.:—

GENOA, 1822.

Rise, Genoa, rise in beauty from the sea:
  Old Doria's blood is flowing in thy veins:
  Rise, peerless in thy beauty! what remains
  Of thy old glory is enough for me!
Flow then, ye emerald waters, bright and free;
  And breathe, ye orange groves, along her plains;
  Ye fountains, sparkle through her marble fanes;
  And hang aloft, thou rich and purple sky!
Hang up thy gorgeous canopy, thou sun!
  Shine on her marble palaces, that gleam
  Like silver in the never-dying beam:
  Think of the years of glory she has won.
  She must not sink before her race is run,
  Nor her long age of conquest seem a dream.

In Milton's Sonnets there is nothing of the flow and excited temperament of 'Lycidas:' the reiteration of the rhyme seems in general to embarrass and impede the author; the words are sometimes forced into their places: it seems as if the writer was resolved to rely solely on the strength or elevation of the thought: neither have they any imagination, except the last; nor any rural pictures.

This is a less favourable view of these Sonnets than I have been accustomed hitherto to take; but it arises from a still more close and analytical dissection of them, or perhaps from a transient state of gloom and spleen in myself. I will never admit that the sonnet is not capable of every sort of sweetness and poetical spirit; but its shortness is some impediment to the gradual elevation to grand or passionate strains: it has not

Ample room and verge enough.

Though Milton's single images are commonly given with extraordinary compression, yet the multitude of them is inconsistent with the limits of the sonnet: the

* See "Athenæum," August 22, 1835.

† See Dyer's "Specimens of English Sonnets," 1833. This chronological and critical series of sonnets has been selected in concurrence with the opinions which I ventured to express to the editor. It appears to me an instructive gradation of specimens, and ought to be studied by every lover of English poetry with great attention: it shows the progress of language and thought, and proves that the genuine character of poetry is always the same. How little difference is there between the language and sentiment and harmony of Shakspeare, and those of the present day! The high intellect and sensibility of human nature are always the same.

power of the web depends on its combination and extension. The poet scorns all prettiness or littleness: I do not wonder, therefore, that in these short compositions he has not hit the popular taste: I am rather surprised, that, fond as he was of the Italian poets, he did not here catch more of their manner; at least of the solemn and sombre inspiration of Dante, if not of the amatory tenderness of Petrarch.

Loftiness of understanding, and the resolution of a bold, virtuous, strong, and uncompromising heart, the bard had at all times; they were inseparable from his nature: but I persevere in the conviction, that during that long period of his middle life, when he was engaged in political controversy and state affairs, the fire and tone of the muse were suppressed, and partly forgotten. Mighty poet as he was, I am sure that he would have been still greater if he had never engaged in politics: these politics weighed down and stifled all the romantic predilections and golden arrays of his youthful taste and enthusiastic imagination: chivalry was his early delight, and how could chivalry and democracy co-exist?

Such are the inconsistencies of the most highly endowed and greatest of men! for what man has been greater or more virtuous than Milton? Though the idle pomps and riches of the world were not with him,—empty possessions which he scorned; yet how much greater was he than kings and heroes! In his solitary study, working out his glorious fables by the midnight lamp, how infinitely more exalted than in his office of secretary; or than if he had been performing the acts of Cromwell and Fairfax, the themes of his majestic muse!

I.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

O NIGHTINGALE, that on yon bloomy spray
  Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still;
  Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
  While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May[a].
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
  First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill[b],
  Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will
  Have link'd that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
  Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh;
  As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why:
  Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
  Both them I serve, and of their train am I[c].

II.

DONNA legiadra, il cui bel nome honora
  L' herbosa val di Rheno, e il nobil varco;
  Bene è colui d'ogni valore scarco,
  Qual tuo spirto gentil non innamora:

[a] *While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May.*

Because the nightingale is supposed to begin singing in April.—T. WARTON.

[b] *First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill, &c.*

That is, if they happen to be heard before the cuckoo, it is lucky for the lover. Milton laments afterwards, that hitherto the nightingale had not preceded the cuckoo as she ought: had always sung too late, that is, after the cuckoo.—T. WARTON.

[c] *Of their train am I.*

This sonnet has been commended rather more than it deserves: the nightingale is a common theme of poets, and has been often better sung.

Che dolcemente mostra si di fuora
De sui atti soavi giamai parco,
E i don', che son d' amor saette ed arco,
La onde l' alta tua virtu s' infiora.
Quando tu vaga parli, o lieta canti
Che mover possa duro alpestre legno,
Guardi ciascun a gli occhi, ed a gli orecchi
L' entrata, chi di te si trouva indegno;
Gratia sola di su gli vaglia, inanti
Che 'l disio amoroso al cuor s' invecchi.

III.

Qual in colle aspro, al imbrunir di sera
L' avezza giovinetta pastorella
Va bagnando l' herbetta strana e bella
Che mal si spande a disusata spera
Fuor di sua natia alma primavera,
Cosi Amor meco insù la lingua snella
Desta il fior novo di strania favella,
Mentre io di te, vezzosamente altera,
Canto, dal mio buon popol non inteso
E 'l bel Tamigi cangio col bel Arno.
Amor lo volse, ed io a l' altrui peso
Seppi ch' Amor cosa mai volse indarno.
Deh! foss' il mio cuor lento e 'l duro seno
A chi pianta dal ciel si buon terreno.

CANZONE[d].

Ridonsi donne e giovani amorosi
M' accostandosi attorno, e perche scrivi,
Perche tu scrivi in lingua ignota e strana
Verseggiando d' amor, e come t' osi?
Dinne, se la tua speme sia mai vana,
E de pensieri lo miglior t' arrivi;
Cosi mi van burlando, altri rivi
Altri lidi t' aspettan, ed altre onde
Nelle cui verdi sponde
Spuntati ad hor, ad hor a la tua chioma
L' immortal guiderdon d' eterne frondi
Perche alle spalle tue soverchia soma?
Canzon dirotti, e tu per me rispondi
Dice mia Donna, e 'l suo dir, é il mio cuore
Questa e lingua di cui si vanta Amore.

[d] It is from Petrarch, that Milton mixes the *canzone* with the *sonetto*. Dante regarded the *canzone* as the most perfect species of lyric composition, "Della Volg. Eloqu." c. iv. but, for the *canzone*, he allows more laxity than for the sonnet. He says, when the song is written on a grave or tragic subject, it is denominated *canzone;* and when on a comic, *cantilena*, as diminutive.—T. Warton.

IV.

Diodati, e te 'l dirò con maraviglia,
  Quel ritroso io ch' amor spreggiar soléa
  E de suoi lacci spesso mi ridéa
  Gia caddi, ov' huom dabben talhor s' impiglia.
Ne treccie d' oro, ne guancia vermiglia
  M' abbaglian sì, ma sotto novo idea
  Pellegrina bellezza che 'l cuor bea,
  Portamenti alti honesti[e], e nelle ciglia
Quel sereno fulgor d' amabil nero,
  Parole adorne di lingua piu d' una,
  E 'l cantar che di mezzo l' hemispero
Traviar ben puo la faticosa Luna,
  E degli occhi suoi auventa si gran fuoco
  Che l' incerar gli orecchi mi fia poco.

V.

Per certo i bei vostr' occhi, Donna mia
  Esser non puo che non sian lo mio sole
  Si mi percuoton forte, come ei suole
  Per l' arene di Libia chi s' invia,
Mentre un caldo vapor (ne sentì pria)
  Da quel lato si spinge, ove mi duole,
  Che forse amanti nelle lor parole
  Chiaman sospir; io non so che si sia:
Parte rinchiusa, e turbida si cela:
  Scosso mi il petto, e poi n' uscendo poco
  Quivi d' attorno o s' agghiaccia, o s' ingiela;
Ma quanto a gli occi giunge a trovar loco
  Tutte le notti a me suol far piovose
  Finche mia Alba rivien colma di rose[f].

VI.

Giovane piano, e semplicetto amante
  Poi che fuggir me stesso in dubbio sono,
  Madonna a voi del mio cuor l' humil dono
  Farò divoto; io certo a prove tante
L' hebbi fedele, intrepido, costante,
  De pensieri leggiadro, accorto, e buono;
  Quando rugge il gran mondo, e scocca il tuono,
  S' arma di se, e d' intero diamante:

[e] *Portamenti alti honesti.*

So before 'Son.' iii. 8:—"Vezzosamente altera." *Portamento* expresses the lofty dignified deportment, by which the Italian poets constantly describe female beauty; and which is strikingly characteristic of the composed majestic carriage of the Italian ladies, either as contrasted with the liveliness of the French, or the timid delicacy of the English.—T. Warton.

[f] *Colma di rose.*

The forced thoughts at the close of this sonnet are intolerable: but he was now in the land of conceit, and was infected by writing in its language. He had changed his native Thames for Arno, 'Son.' iii. 9:—

Canto, dal mio buon popol non inteso,
E 'l bel Tamigi cangio col bel Arno.—T. Warton.

Tanto del forse, e d' invidia sicuro,
Di timori, e speranze, al popol use,
Quanto d' ingegno, e d' alto valor vago,
E di cetra sonora, e delle muse:
Sol troverete in tal parte men duro,
Ove Amor mise l' insanabil ago [g].

VII.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.

How soon hath Time [h], the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

[g] *L' insanabil ago.*

Milton had a natural severity of mind. For love-verses, his Italian sonnets have a remarkable air of gravity and dignity: they are free from the metaphysics of Petrarch, and are more in the manner of Dante: yet he calls his seventh sonnet, in a letter printed from the Cambridge manuscript by Birch, a composition in the Petrarchian stanza. In 1762, the late Mr. Thomas Hollis examined the Laurentian library at Florence, for six Italian sonnets of Milton, addressed to his friend Chimentelli; and for other Italian and Latin compositions and various original letters, said to be remaining in manuscript at Florence: he searched also for an original bust in marble of Milton, supposed to be somewhere in that city: but he was unsuccessful in his curious inquiries.—T. WARTON.

This bust of Milton is now in England: it is beautifully carved, small, and in a very architectural case of mahogany. The likeness shows both the features and the age of the poet.—J. B.

Mr. Hayley justly considers this sonnet as a very spirited and singular sketch of the poet's own character.—TODD.

[h] *How soon hath Time, &c.*

This sonnet was written at Cambridge in 1631, and sent in the following letter to a friend, who had importuned our author to take orders:—

"Sir,—Besides that, in sundry other respects, I must acknowledge me to profit by you whenever we meet; you were often to me, and were yesterday especially, as good a watchman to admonish that the hours of the night pass on (for so I call my life, as yet obscure and unserviceable to mankind), and that the day with me is at hand, wherein Christ commands all to labour while there is light: which because I am persuaded you do to no other purpose, than out of a true desire that God should be honoured in every one, I therefore think myself bound, though unaskt, to give you account, as oft as occasion is, of this my tardy moving, according to the precept of my conscience, which I firmly trust is not without God. Yet now I will not streine for any set apologie, but only refere myself to what my mind shall have at any time, to declare herself at her best ease. But if you think as you said, that too much love of learning is in fault, and that I have given up myself to dreame away my years in the arms of a studious retirement, like Endymion with the Moone, as the tale of Latmus goes; yet consider, that if it were no more than the meer love of learning, whether it proceed from a principle

VIII.

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY.

Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in arms,
  Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
  If deed of honour did thee ever please,
  Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee; for he knows the charms
  That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
  And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
  Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower:
  The great Emathian conquerour bid spare

bad, good, or naturall, it could not have held out thus long against so strong opposition on the other side of every kind. For, if it be bad, why should not all the fond hopes, that forward youthe and vanitie are fledged with, together with gaine, pride, and ambition, call me forward more powerfully, than a poor, regardless, and unprofitable sin of curiosity should be able to withhold me, whereby a man cuts himselfe off from all action, and becomes the most helplesse, pusillanimous, and unweaponed creature in the world; the most unfit and unable to do that, which all mortals most aspire to; either to be usefull to his friends, or to offend his enemies. Or, if it be to be thought a natural pronenesse, there is against that a much more potent inclination inbred, which about this time of a man's life sollicits most the desire of house and family of his owne, to which nothing is esteemed more helpful, than the early entering into credible employment, and nothing more hindring than this affected solitarinesse; and tho' this were enough, yet there is to this another act, if not of pure, yet of refined nature, no lesse availeable to dissuade prolonged obscurity; a desire of honour, and repute, and immortal fame, seated in the breast of every true scholar; which all make haste to, by the readiest ways of publishing and divulging conceived merits, as well those that shall, as those that never shall obtain it. Nature would presently work the more prevalent way, if there were nothing but this inferiour bent to restraine her. Lastly, the love of learning, as it is the pursuit of something good, it would sooner follow the more excellent and supreme good known and presented, and so be quickly exempted from the emptie and fantastic chase of shadows and notions, to the solid good flowing from due and tymely obedience to that command in the Gospel, sett out by the terrible seasing of him that hid the talent. It is more probable therefore that, not the endless delight of speculation, but this very consideration of that great commandment, does not presse forward as soon as many doe to undergoe, but keeps off with a sacred reverence and religious advisement how best to undergoe; not taking thought of being late, so it give advantage to be more fit; for those that were latest lost nothing when the maister of the vineyard came in to give each one his hire. And here I am come to a stream-head, copious enough to disburthen itself like Nilus at seven mouths into an ocean; but then I should also run into a reciprocall contradiction of ebbing and flowing at once; and do that which I excuse myself for not doing, preach and not preach. Yet that you may see I am something suspicious of myselfe, and do take notice of a certain belatednesse in me, I am the bolder to send you some of my nightward thoughts, some while since, because they come in not altogether unfitly, made up in a Petrarchian stanza, which I told you of:—

How soon hath Time, &c.

By this I believe you may well repent of having made mention at all of this matter; for if I have not all this while won you to this, I have certainly wearied you of it. This therefore alone may be a sufficient reason for me to keep me as I am; least, having thus tired you singly, I should deal worse with a whole congregation, and spoyle all the patience of a parish; for I myself do not only see my own tediousnesse, but now grow offended with it, that has hindered me thus long from coming to the last and best period of my letter, and that which must now chiefly work my pardon;—that I am your true and unfained friend, John Milton."

The house of Pindarus[i], when temple and tower
Went to the ground: and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet[j] had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

IX.

TO A VIRTUOUS YOUNG LADY.

Lady, that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunn'd the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen,
That labour up the hill of heavenly truth;
The better part with Mary and with Ruth
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.
Thy care is fix'd, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame[k]. Therefore be sure,
Thou, when the bridegroom with his feastful friends[l]
Passes to bliss at the mid hour of night,
Hast gain'd thy entrance, Virgin wise and pure.

[i] *The great Emathian conquerour bid spare*
The house of Pindarus.

As a poet, Milton had as good right to expect this favour as Pindar; nor was the English monarch less a protector of the arts, and a lover of poetry, than Alexander. As a subject, Milton was too conscious that his situation was precarious, and that his seditious tracts had forfeited all pretensions to his sovereign's mercy. Mr. Bowle here refers us to Pliny, l. vii. c. 29:—"Alexander Magnus Pindari vatis familiæ penatibusque jussit parci, cum Thebas caperet;" and to the old commentator on Spenser's "Pastorals," who relates this incident more at large, and where it might have first struck Milton, as a great reader of Spenser. Ælian says, that in this havoc, Alexander honoured the family of Pindar, and suffered his house alone to stand untouched and entire; having killed 90,000 Thebans, and takén 30,000 prisoners.—T. Warton.

[j] *Of sad Electra's poet, &c.*

Plutarch relates, that when the Lacedemonian general Lysander took Athens, it was proposed in a council of war entirely to rase the city and convert its site into a desert: but during the debate, at a banquet of the chief officers, a certain Phocian sung some fine anastrophics from a chorus of the "Electra" of Euripides; which so affected the hearers, that they declared it an unworthy act, to reduce a place, so celebrated for the production of illustrious men, to total ruin and desolation. The lines of Euripides are at ver. 168. It appears, however, that Lysander ordered the walls and fortifications to be demolished. By the epithet "sad" Milton denominates the pathetic character of Euripides. "Repeated" signifies recited. But it has been ingeniously suggested, that the epithet "sad" belongs to Electra, who very often so calls herself in Euripides's play; and says, that all the city gave her the same appellation.—T. Warton.

Electra had been before denominated "sad" by Drummond, in his "Elegy on Prince Henry's death:"—

And sad Electra's sisters, who still weepe.

This is one of Milton's best Sonnets, as Mr. Warton observes. It was written in 1642, when the king's army was arrived at Brentford, and had thrown the whole city into consternation.—Todd.

[k] *And hope that reaps not shame.*

Rom. v. 5.—Hurd.

[l] *When the bridegroom with his feastful friends.*

"Feastful" is an epithet in Spenser. He alludes to the midnight feasting of the Jews before the consummation of marriage.—T. Warton.

X.

TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY.

Daughter to that good earl[m], once president
Of England's council and her treasury,
Who lived in both, unstain'd with gold or fee,
And left them both, more in himself content,
Till sad the breaking of that parliament
Broke him, as that dishonest victory,
At Chæronea, fatal to liberty,
Kill'd with report that old man eloquent[n].
Though later born than to have known the days
Wherein your father flourish'd, yet by you,
Madam, methinks I see him living yet;
So well your words his noble virtues praise,
That all both judge you to relate them true,
And to possess them, honour'd Margaret.

XI.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON MY WRITING CERTAIN TREATISES[o].

A book was writ of late call'd "Tetrachordon[p],"
And woven close, both matter, form, and style;
The subject new: it walk'd the town awhile,
Numbering good intellects; now seldom pored on.

[m] *Daughter to that good earl.*

She was the daughter of Sir James Ley, whose singular learning and abilities raised him through all the great posts of the law, till he came to be made Earl of Marlborough, and Lord High Treasurer, and Lord President of the Council to King James I. He died in an advanced age; and Milton attributes his death to "the breaking of the parliament;" and it is true that the parliament was dissolved the 10th of March, 1628–9, and he died on the 14th of the same month. He left several sons and daughters; and the Lady Margaret was married to Captain Hobson, of the Isle of Wight. It appears, from the accounts of Milton's life, that in 1643 he used frequently to visit this lady and her husband; about which time we may suppose this Sonnet to have been composed.—Newton.

[n] *Kill'd with report that old man eloquent.*

Isocrates, the orator. The victory was gained by Philip of Macedon over the Athenians.—T. Warton.

[o] Dr. Johnson says of this and the next Sonnet, that "the first is contemptible, and the second not excellent;" and yet he had unfairly selected the contemptible Sonnet as a specimen, in his "Dictionary," of this species of verse in English. But Milton wrote this Sonnet in sport.—Todd.

After this proved fact, who can doubt Johnson's malignity and dishonesty towards Milton?

[p] *A book was writ of late call'd "Tetrachordon."*

This elaborate discussion, unworthy in many respects of Milton, and in which much acuteness of argument and comprehension of reading were idly thrown away, was received with contempt, or rather ridicule, as we learn from Howell's "Letters." A better proof that it was treated with neglect is, that it was attacked by two nameless and obscure writers only; one of whom Milton calls, "a serving-man turned solicitor." Our author's divorce was on Platonic principles: he held, that disagreement of mind was a better cause of separation than adultery or frigidity: here was a fair opening for the laughers. This and the following Sonnet were written soon after 1645. For this doctrine Milton was summoned before the lords: but they not approving his accusers, the Presbyterian clergy, or thinking the business too speculative, he was quickly dismissed. On this occasion Milton commenced hostilities against the Presbyterians. He

Cries the stall-reader, Bless us! what a word on
  A title-page is this! and some in file
  Stand spelling false, while one might walk to Mile-
  End Green. Why is it harder, sirs, than Gordon,
Colkitto, or Macdonnel, or Galasp[q]?
  Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek,
  That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.
Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheek[r],
  Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
  When thou taught'st Cambridge, and King Edward, Greek.

XII.

ON THE SAME[s].

I DID but prompt the age to quit their clogs
  By the known rules of ancient liberty,
  When straight a barbarous noise[t] environs me

illustrates his own system in this line of 'Par. Lost,' b. ix. 372:—"Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more." Milton wished he had not written this work in English. This is observed by Mr. Bowle, who points out the following proof, in the 'Defensio Secunda:'—"Vellem hoc tantum, sermone vernaculo me non scripsisse: non enim in vernas lectores incidissem, quibus solenne est sua bona ignorare, aliorum mala irridere." This was one of Milton's books published in consequence of his divorce [separation] from his first wife. "Tetrachordon" signifies expositions on the four chief places in Scripture which mention marriage or nullities in marriage.—T. WARTON.

[q] *Colkitto, or Macdonnel, or Galasp.*

Milton is here collecting, from his hatred to the Scots, what he thinks Scottish names of an ill sound. "Colkitto" and "Macdonnel," are one and the same person; a brave officer on the royal side, an Irishman of the Antrim family, who served under Montrose: the Macdonalds of that family are styled, by way of distinction, "Mac Collcittok," i. e. descendants of lame Colin. "Galasp" is a Scottish writer against the Independents; for whom see Milton's verses 'On the Forcers of Conscience,' &c. He is George Gillespie, one of the Scotch members of the assembly of divines, as his name is subscribed to their letter to the Belgic, French, and Helvetian churches, dated 1643: in which they pray, "that these three nations may be joined as one stick in the hands of the Lord; that all mountains may become plains before them and us; that then all who now see the plummet in our hands, may also behold the top-stone set upon the head of the Lord's house among us, and may help us with shouting to cry, Grace, grace to it." Rushw. p. 371. Such was the rhetoric of these reformers of reformation!—T. WARTON.

[r] *Sir John Cheek.*

Or Cheke: he was the first professor of the Greek tongue in the university of Cambridge, and was highly instrumental in bringing that language into repute, and restoring the original pronunciation of it; though with great opposition from the patrons of ignorance and popery, and especially from Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and chancellor of the university. He was afterwards made one of the tutors to Edward VI. See his Life by Strype, or in the "Biographia Britannica."—NEWTON.

[s] The preceding Sonnet is evidently of a ludicrous, the present of a more contemptuous cast. There is a portrait of the celebrated Spanish poet, Lopez de Vega, painted when he was young; surrounded by dogs, monkeys, and other monsters, and writing in the midst of them, without attending to their noise. It is not improbable that Milton might have seen, or heard of, this curious picture of his contemporary; and be led, in consequence, to describe so minutely, in this Sonnet, the "barbarous noise that environed him."—TODD.

[t] *When straight a barbarous noise, &c.*

Milton was violently censured by the Presbyterian clergy for his 'Tetrachordon,' and other tracts of that tendency.—T. WARTON.

Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs:
As when those hinds [u] that were transform'd to frogs
Rail'd at Latona's twin-born progeny,
Which after held the sun and moon in fee.
But this is got by casting pearl to hogs;
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when truth would set them free [v].
Licence they mean when they cry liberty;
For who loves that, must first be wise and good;
But from that mark how far they rove we see,
For all this waste of wealth, and loss of blood [w].

XIII.

TO MR. H. LAWES, ON THE PUBLISHING HIS AIRS.

Harry, whose tuneful and well-measured song
First taught our English musick how to span
Words with just note and accent, not to scan
With Midas' ears, committing short and long [x];
Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng [y],
With praise enough for Envy to look wan:
To after age thou shalt be writ the man [z],
That with smooth air couldst humour best our tongue.
Thou honour'st verse, and verse must lend her wing
To honour thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,
That tunest their happiest lines in hymn or story [a].
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella [b], whom he woo'd to sing
Met in the milder shades of purgatory.

[u] *As when those hinds, &c.*

The fable of the Lycian clowns changed into frogs is related by Ovid, Met. vi. fab. 4: and the poet, in saying "Which after held the sun and moon in fee," intimates the good hopes which he had of himself, and his expectations of making a considerable figure in the world.—Newton.

[v] *When truth would set them free.*

Compare St. John viii. 32:—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—Todd.

[w] *Loss of blood.*

The latter part of this Sonnet is very fine, and contains a most important political truth.

[x] *With Midas' ears, committing short and long.*

"Committing" is a Latinism, as Mr. Warton observes; and, as Mr. Richardson had remarked, conveys with it the idea of offending against quantity and harmony.—Todd.

[y] *Exempts thee from the throng.*

Horace, Od. i. i. 32:—"Secernunt populo."—Richardson.

[z] *Thou shalt be writ the man.*

This also is in the style of Horace, Od. i. vi. 1:—

Scriberis Vario fortis, et hostium
Victor.—Newton.

[a] *Or story.*

"The story of Ariadne set by him to musick." This is a note in the margin of this Sonnet, as it stands prefixed to "Choice Psalms put into musick by Henry and William Lawes, Lond. for H. Moseley, 1648." The inscription is there, "To my friend Mr. Henry Lawes."—T. Warton.

XIV.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATHARINE THOMSON,

MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND, DECEASED DEC. 16, 1646 [c].

WHEN Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripen'd thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
Of death, call'd life; which us from life doth sever.
Thy works, and alms, and all thy good endeavour,
Stay'd not behind, nor in the grave were trod [d];
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod [e],
Follow'd thee up to joy and bliss for ever.
Love led them on; and Faith, who knew them best
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge; who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

XV.

TO THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX [f].

FAIRFAX, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,

[b] *Than his Casella, &c.*

Dante, on his arrival in Purgatory, sees a vessel approaching the shore, freighted with souls under the conduct of an angel, to be cleansed from their sins, and made fit for Paradise: when they are disembarked, the poet recognises in the crowd his old friend Casella the musician. The interview is strikingly imagined, and, in the course of an affectionate dialogue, the poet requests a soothing air; and Casella sings, with the most ravishing sweetness, Dante's second Canzone. By "milder shades," our author means, shades comparatively much less horrible than those which Dante describes in the "Inferno."—T. WARTON.

See a notice of Henry Lawes in the notes prefixed to 'Comus.'

SONNET XIV.—[c] *Mrs. Catharine Thomson.*

I find in the accounts of Milton's life, that when he was first made Latin Secretary, he lodged at one Thomson's, next door to the Bull-head tavern at Charing-cross. This Mrs. Thomson was in all probability one of that family.—NEWTON.

[d] *Stay'd not behind, nor in the grave were trod.*

"Nor in the grave were trod," is a beautiful periphrasis for "good deeds forgotten at her death;" and a happy improvement of the original line in the manuscript:—
"Straight follow'd thee the path that saints have trod."—T. WARTON.

[e] *With her golden rod.*

Perhaps from the golden reed in the Apocalypse.—T. WARTON.

[f] For obvious political reasons, this Sonnet, the two following, and the two to Cyriack Skinner, were not inserted in the edition of 1673; they were first printed at the end of Philips's "Life of Milton" prefixed to the English version of his public letters, 1694. They are quoted by Toland in his "Life of Milton," 1698, pp. 24, 34, 35. Tonson omitted them in his editions of 1695, 1705: but growing less offensive by time, they appear in his edition of 1713. The Cambridge manuscript happily corrects many of their vitiated readings. They were the favourites of the republicans long after the Restoration: it was some consolation to an exterminated party to have such good poetry remaining on their side of the question. These five Sonnets, being frequently transcribed, or repeated from memory, became extremely incorrect: their faults were implicitly preserved by Tonson, and afterwards continued without examination by Tickell and Fenton. This Sonnet, as appears from Milton's manuscript, was addressed to Fairfax at the siege of Colchester, 1648.—T. WARTON.

And all her jealous monarchs with amaze
And rumours loud, that daunt remotest kings[g];
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their hydra heads, and the false North displays
Her broken league[h] to imp their serpent-wings[i].
O, yet a nobler task awaits thy hand
(For what can war but endless war still breed?),
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And publick faith clear'd from the shameful brand
Of publick fraud[j]. In vain doth valour bleed,
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

XVI.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL[k].

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud,
Not of war only[l], but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,
And on the neck of crowned Fortune[m] proud
Hast rear'd God's trophies, and his work pursued;
While Darwen stream[n], with blood of Scots imbrued,

[g] *Daunt remotest kings.*

Who dreaded the example of England, that their monarchies would be turned into republics.—T. Warton.

[h] *Her broken league.*

Because the English parliament held, that the Scotch had broken their covenant, by Hamilton's march into England.—Hurd.

[i] *To imp their serpent-wings.*

In falconry, to imp a feather in a hawk's wing, is to add a new piece to a mutilated stump. From the Saxon *impan*, to ingraft.—T. Warton.

[j] *Of publick fraud.*

The Presbyterian committees and sub-committees. The grievance so much complained of by Milton in his 'History of England.' "Publick fraud" is opposed to "publick faith," the security given by the parliament to the city contributions for carrying on the war.—Warburton.

[k] Written in 1652. The prostitution of Milton's Muse to the celebration of Cromwell, was as inconsistent and unworthy, as that this enemy to kings, to ancient magnificence, and to all that is venerable and majestic, should have been buried in the chapel of Henry VII.; but there is great dignity both of sentiment and expression in this Sonnet: and, unfortunately, the close is an anticlimax to both. After a long flow of perspicuous and nervous language, the unexpected pause at "Worcester's laureat wreath," is very emphatical, and has a striking effect.—T. Warton.

[l] *Not of war only.*

A "cloud of war" is a classical expression: "Nubem belli," Virg. Æn. x. 809.—Newton.

[m] *Crowned Fortune.*

His malignity to kings aided his imagination in the expression of this sublime sentiment.—Hurd.

[n] *While Darwen stream.*

The Darwen, or Derwen, is a small river near Preston in Lancashire; and there Cromwell routed the Scotch army under Duke Hamilton in August, 1648. The battles of Dunbar and Worcester are too well known to be particularised; both fought on the memorable 3rd of September, the one in 1650, and the other in 1651.—Newton.

And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureat wreath [o]. Yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than War: new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains [p].
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw [q].

XVII.

TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER [r].

Vane, young in years, but in sage counsel old,
Than whom a better senator ne'er held

[o] *And Worcester's laureat wreath.*

This seems pretty, but is inexact in this place. However, the expression alludes to what Cromwell said of his success at Worcester, that it was his "crowning mercy."—Hurd.

This hemistich originally stood, "And twenty battles more." Such are often our first thoughts in a fine passage. I take it, that one of the essential beauties of the Sonnet is often to carry the pauses into the middle of the lines. Of this our author has given many striking examples, and here we discern the writer whose ear was tuned to blank verse.—T. Warton.

[p] *Secular chains.*

The ministers moved Cromwell to lend the secular arm to suppress sectaries.—Warburton.

[q] *Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.*

Hence it appears that this Sonnet was written about May, 1652. By "hireling wolves," he means the Presbyterian clergy, who possessed the revenues of the parochial benefices on the old constitution, and whose conformity he supposes to be founded altogether on motives of emolument. There was now no end of innovation and reformation. In 1649, it was proposed in parliament to abolish tithes, as Jewish and antichristian, and as they were authorised only by the ceremonial law of Moses, which was abrogated by the gospel: but as the proposal tended to endanger lay-impropriations, the notion of their divine right was allowed to have some weight, and the business was postponed. This was an argument in which Selden had abused his great learning. Milton's party were of opinion, that as every parish should elect, so it should respectively sustain, its own minister by public contribution: others proposed to throw the tithes of the whole kingdom into one common stock, and to distribute them according to the size of the parishes; some of the Independents urged, that Christ's ministers should have no settled property at all, but be like the apostles, who were sent out to preach without staff or scrip, without common necessaries; to whom Christ said, "Lacked ye anything?" A succession of miracles was therefore to be worked, to prevent the saints from starving. Milton's praise of Cromwell may be thought inconsistent with that zeal which he professed for liberty: for Cromwell's assumption of the protectorate, even if we allow the lawfulness of the rebellion, was palpably a violent usurpation of power over the rights of the nation, and was reprobated even by the republican party. Milton, however, in various parts of the 'Defensio Secunda,' gives excellent admonitions to Cromwell, and with great spirit, freedom, and eloquence, not to abuse his new authority; yet not without an intermixture of the grossest adulation.—T. Warton.

[r] Perhaps written about the time of the last, having the same tendency. Sir Henry Vane the younger was the chief of the Independents, and therefore Milton's friend: he was the contriver of the solemn league and covenant: he was an eccentric character, in an age of eccentric characters. In religion the most fantastic of all enthusiasts, and a weak writer, he was a judicious and sagacious politician: the warmth of his zeal never misled his public measures: he was a knight-errant in everything but affairs of state. The sagacious Bishop Burnet in vain attempted to penetrate the darkness of his creed. He

The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repell'd
The fierce Epirot and the African bold:
Whether to settle peace or to unfold
The drift of hollow states[s] hard to be spell'd;
Then to advise how War may, best upheld,
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage: besides to know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each, thou hast learn'd, which few have done:
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe:
Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

XVIII.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONT[t].

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worship'd stocks and stones[u],

held, that the devils and the damned would be saved: he believed himself the person delegated by God to reign over the saints upon earth for a thousand years. His principles founded a sect called the Vanists. On the whole, no single man ever exhibited such a medley of fanaticism and dissimulation, solid abilities and visionary delusions, good sense and madness. In the pamphlets of that age he is called Sir Humorous Vanity. He was beheaded 1662. On the scaffold, he compared Tower Hill to Mount Pisgah, where Moses went to die, in full assurance of being immediately placed at the right hand of Christ. Milton alludes to the execution of Vane and other regicides, after the Restoration, and in general to the sufferings of his friends on that event, in a speech of the Chorus on Samson's degradation, 'Sams. Ag.' v. 687. This Sonnet seems to have been written in behalf of the Independents, against the Presbyterian hierarchy.—T. Warton.

[s] *Hollow states.*

Peace with the hollow states of Holland.—Warburton.

[t] In 1655, the Duke of Savoy determined to compel his reformed subjects in the valleys of Piedmont to embrace popery, or quit their country; all who remained and refused to be converted, with their wives and children, suffered a most barbarous massacre: those who escaped fled into the mountains, from whence they sent agents into England to Cromwell for relief. He instantly commanded a general fast, and promoted a national contribution, in which near £40,000 were collected. The persecution was suspended, the duke recalled his army, and the surviving inhabitants of the Piedmontese valleys were reinstated in their cottages, and the peaceable exercise of their religion. On this business there are several state-letters in Cromwell's name written by Milton. One of them is to the Duke of Savoy, and is published in his 'Prose Works.' Milton's mind, busied with this affecting subject, here broke forth in a strain of poetry, where his feelings were not fettered by ceremony or formality. The Protestants availed themselves of an opportunity of exposing the horrors of popery, by publishing many sets of prints of this unparalleled scene of religious butchery, which operated like Fox's "Book of Martyrs." Sir Wm. Moreland, Cromwell's agent for the valleys of Piedmont, at Geneva, published a minute account of this whole transaction, in "The History of the Valleys of Piemont, &c. Lond. 1658," fol. with numerous cuts. Milton, among many other atrocious examples of the papal spirit, appeals to this massacre, in Cromwell's letter to King Charles Gustavus, dat. 1656: "Testes Alpinæ valles miserorum cæde ac sanguine redundantes," &c.—T. Warton.

[u] *Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,*
When all our fathers worship'd stocks and stones.

It is pretended that, when the church of Rome became corrupt, they preserved the primitive apostolical Christianity; and that they have manuscripts against the papal

Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks [v]. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who, having learn'd thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe [w].

XIX.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide [x],
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He, returning, chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied [y]?"
I fondly ask: but Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies;—"God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts [z]; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait [a]."

antichrist and purgatory, as old as 1120. See their history by Paul Perrin, Genev. 1619. Their poverty and seclusion from the rest of the world for so many ages, contributed in great measure to this simplicity of worship. In his pamphlet, 'The likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of Churches,' against endowing churches with tithes, our author frequently refers to the happy poverty and purity of the Waldenses.—T. Warton.

[v] *That roll'd Mother with infant down the rocks.*

There is a print of this piece of cruelty in Moreland. He relates that "a mother was hurled down a mighty rock, with a little infant in her arms; and three days after was found dead, with the little childe alive, but fast clasped between the arms of the dead mother, which were cold and stiffe, insomuch that those who found them had much ado to get the young childe out," p. 363.—T. Warton.

[w] *Babylonian woe.*

Antichrist.—Warburton.

[x] *And that one talent which is death to hide.*

He speaks here with allusion to the parable of the talents, Matt. xxv., and he speaks with great modesty of himself, as if he had not five, or two, but only one talent.—Newton.

[y] *Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?*

Here is a pun on the doctrine in the gospel, that we are to work only while it is light, and in the night no man can work. There is an ambiguity between the natural light of the day, and the author's blindness.—T. Warton.

[z] *Man's work, or his own gifts.*

Free-will or grace.—T. Warton.

[a] *Stand and wait.*

My own opinion is that this is the noblest of Milton's Sonnets.

XX.

TO MR. LAWRENCE.

LAWRENCE, of virtuous father virtuous son [b],
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won

[b] *Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son, &c.*

Of the "virtuous son," nothing has transpired: the "virtuous father," Henry Lawrence, was member for Hertfordshire in the little parliament which began in 1653, and was active in settling the protectorate of Cromwell. In consequence of his services, he was made president of Cromwell's council; where he appears to have signed many severe and arbitrary decrees, not only against the royalists, but the Brownists, fifth-monarchy men, and other sectarists. He continued high in favour with Richard Cromwell. As innovation is progressive, perhaps the son, Milton's friend, was an Independent and still warmer republican. The family appears to have been seated not far from Milton's neighbourhood in Buckinghamshire: for Henry Lawrence's near relation, William Lawrence, a writer, and appointed a judge in Scotland by Cromwell, and who was in 1631 a gentleman commoner of Trinity College, Oxford, died at Bedfont, near Staines, in Middlesex, in 1682. Hence, says Milton, v. 2:—

Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, &c.

Milton, in his first 'Reply to More,' written 1654, recites among the most respectable of his friends, who contributed to form the commonwealth,—"Montacutium, Laurentium, summo ingenio ambos, optimisque artibus expositos," &c. See Milton's 'Prose Works.' Where by "Montacutium" we are to understand Edward Montague, Earl of Manchester; who, while Lord Kimbolton, was one of the members of the house of commons impeached by the king, and afterwards a leader in the rebellion. I believe they both deserved this panegyric.—T. WARTON.

Mr. Warton is mistaken in saying that "of the 'virtuous son' nothing has transpired." This Henry Lawrence, the "virtuous" son is the author of a work, of which I am in possession, suited to Milton's taste; on the subject of which, I make no doubt, he and the author "by the fire helped to waste many a sullen day." It is entitled "Of our Communion and Warre with Angels, &c." Printed Anno Dom. 1646, 4to. 189 pages. The dedication is "To my Most deare and Most honoured Mother, the Lady Lawrence." I suppose him also to be the same Henry Lawrence, who printed "A Vindication of the Scriptures and Christian Ordinances," 1649, Lond. 4to.—TODD.

See "Gentleman's Magazine," about 1825, for the Lawrence pedigree, furnished by Sir James Lawrence, then resident at Paris. This lineal descendant of the subject of Milton's panegyric has also communicated to the publisher the following important and interesting information on the same subject:—

"Henry Lawrence, of whose family and descent a long account is inserted in the 'Gent. Mag.' for July, 1815, was the eldest son of Sir John Lawrence, of St. Ives, in Huntingdonshire, by Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Ralph Waller, Esq., of Clerkenwell, of the Beaconsfield family, who took to her second husband Robert Bathurst of Lecklade, and was the mother of Sir Edward Bathurst, created a baronet 1643. He was educated at Emmanuel-college, and represented Westmoreland in the Long Parliament: having retired into Holland, he published at Amsterdam, in 1646, a book, 'Of our Communion and Warre with Angels,' and another book 'Of Baptism.' He afterwards represented Hertfordshire; was a lord of the other house; and after the abdication of Richard Cromwell, continued president of the council of state. He married Ame, daughter of that inveterate antagonist of the house of Stuart, Sir Edward Peyton, of Isolham, in Cambridgeshire, Bart., by whom he had seven sons and six daughters. He died in 1664, and was buried at St. Margaret's, Hertfordshire.

"Henry, the eldest, was the 'virtuous son:' for in a political squib, printed 1660, called 'The Receipts and Disbursements of the Committee of Safety,' we find,—'Item, reimbursed to the said Lord Lawrence several sums of money, which his eldest son had squandered away on poets and dedications to his ingenuity, to the value of five hundred

From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius reinspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sow'd nor spun[c].
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attick taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge[d], and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

XXI.

TO CYRIACK SKINNER[e]

Cyriack, whose grandsire, on the royal bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause
Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench;
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth, that, after, no repenting draws[f]!
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intends[g], and what the French.

pounds more. Item, paid for three great saddles for the Lord Lawrence's son, and for provender for his lofty steeds, ever since the Protector's political death, five hundred pounds. Item, paid for a pound of May butter made of a cow's milk that fed on Hermon Hill, given to the said Lady Lawrence for pious uses, 87*l.* 16*s.*' Henry died 1679. His son, Sir Edward Lawrence of St. Ives, was created a baronet in January, 1749, and died in May following. Martha, one of the president's daughters, married Richard, Earl of Barrymore, and was married to his successor, Lawrence, Earl of Barrymore; John Lawrence, a younger son, left England with James Bradshaw, a nephew of the judge, and settled in Jamaica, where James Bradshaw, after having been president of the Assembly, died 1699; and John Lawrence, who died 1690, was great-grandfather to the present Sir James Lawrence, Knight of Malta."

[c] *That neither sow'd nor spun.*

Alluding, as Dr. Newton observes, to Matt. vi. 26, 28:—"They sow not, neither do they spin." And compare ver. 30 with the preceding hemistich.—Todd.

[d] *He who of those delights can judge, &c.*

The close of this sonnet is perfectly in the style of Horace and the Grecian lyrics; as is that of the following to Cyriack Skinner.—T. Warton.

[e] Cyriack Skinner was one of the principal members of Harrington's political club. Wood says, that he was "an ingenious young gentleman, and scholar to John Milton; which Skinner sometimes held the chair."—"Ath. Oxon." ii. 591.

[f] *In mirth, that, after, no repenting draws.*

This is the decent mirth of Martial:—

Nox non ebria, sed soluta curis.—T. Warton.

[g] *And what the Swede intends, &c.*

Charles Gustavus, King of Sweden, was at this time waging war with Poland, and the French with the Spaniards in the Netherlands: and what Milton says is somewhat in the manner and spirit of Horace, Od. II. xi. 1:—

Quid bellicosus Cantaber, et Scythes,
Hirpine Quincti, cogitet, Adria
Divisus objecto, remittas
Quærere, &c.—Newton.

To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
  Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;
  For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
  That with superfluous burden loads the day,
  And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

XXII.

TO THE SAME.

Cyriack, this three years day these eyes, though clear,
  To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
  Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
  Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
  Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
  Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
  Of heart or hope[h]; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
  The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied[i]
  In liberty's defence[j], my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
  This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
  Content though blind, had I no better guide.

[h] *Of heart or hope, &c.*

One of Milton's characteristics was a singular fortitude of mind, arising from a consciousness of superior abilities, and a conviction that his cause was just.—T. Warton.

[i] *To have lost them overplied, &c.*

When he was employed to answer Salmasius, one of his eyes was almost gone; and the physicians predicted the loss of both if he proceeded: but he says, in answer to Du Moulin, "I did not long balance whether my duty should be preferred to my eyes."—T. Warton.

[j] *In liberty's defence, &c.*

This Sonnet was not hazarded in the edition of 1673, where the last appears: for the 'Defensio pro Populo Anglicano,' of which he here speaks with so much satisfaction and self-applause, at the Restoration was ordered to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman, together with his 'Iconoclastes,' at which time his person was spared; and, by a singular act of royal clemency, he survived to write 'Paradise Lost.' But Milton's prose was to suffer another disgrace. Twenty-seven propositions, gathered from the writings of our author, Buchanan, Hobbes, Baxter, John Goodwin, Knox, Owen, and others, were proscribed by the University of Oxford, July 21, 1683, as destructive both to church and state; and ordered to be burnt in the court of the schools. This transaction is celebrated in a poem of the "Musæ Anglicanæ," called "Decretum Oxoniense," 1683, vol. ii. pp. 180, 181, edit. 1714. I transcribe some of the lines with abhorrence:—

Hæ tibi sint laudes immortalesque triumphi,
O Dea, Bellositi sacras quæ protegis arces!—
Quanquam, O, si simili quicunque hæc scripserit auctor
Fato succubuisset, eodemque arserit igne;
In medio videas flamma crepitante cremari
Miltonum, cœlo terrisque inamabile nomen!

But by what follows, the writer does not seem to have been insensible to the beauties of Milton's poetry.—T. Warton.

XXIII.

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE.

METHOUGHT I saw my late espoused saint[k]
  Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave[l],
  Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
  Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint
  Purification in the old Law did save,
  And such, as yet once more I trust to have
  Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint;—
Came, vested all in white, pure as her mind:
  Her face was veil'd; yet to my fancied sight
  Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
  But, O, as to embrace me she inclined,
  I waked; she fled; and day brought back my night.

[k] *Methought I saw my late espoused saint, &c.*

This Sonnet was written about the year 1656, on the death of his second wife, Catherine, the daughter of Captain Woodcock of Hackney, a rigid sectarist. She died in child-bed of a daughter, within a year after their marriage. Milton had now been long totally blind; so that this might have been one of his day-dreams.—T. WARTON.

[l] *Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave.*

Dr. Johnson calls this "a poor Sonnet." Perhaps he was not struck with this fine allusion to Euripides.—T. WARTON.

ON THE MORNING

OF

CHRIST'S NATIVITY.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE 'Hymn on the Nativity' is a favourite poem with me, notwithstanding Thomas Warton, unlike himself, has commenced with a censure on what he calls its conceits: Joseph Warton, in a short but beautiful note on ver. 173, has expressed a very opposite opinion. There is no doubt that the *prima stamina* of the bard's divine epics are exhibited in this poem; but it has several peculiarities, which distinguish it from the poet's other compositions: it is more truly lyrical; the stanza is beautifully constructed; and there is a solemnity, a grandeur, and a swell of verse, which is magical. The images are magnificent, and they have this superiority of excellence; that none of them are merely descriptive, but have a mixture of intellectuality and spirituality.

If there are any "conceits," they are entirely confined to the first two stanzas

* This Ode, in which the many learned allusions are highly poetical, was probably composed as a college-exercise at Cambridge, our author being now only twenty-one years old. In the edition of 1645, in its title it is said to have been written in 1629. We are informed by himself, that he was employed in writing this piece, in the conclusion of the sixth Elegy to his friend Deodate, which appears to have been sent about the close of the month December.—T. WARTON.

of the lyrical part,—"It was the winter wild," and "Only with speeches fair:" all the rest is essence of poetry; and that of the strongest and most picturesque sort. The ninth stanza, "When such music sweet," is such as perhaps no one but Milton could have written; and still several, which follow, rise even upon this.

Some one has said that Milton had no ear for the harmony of versification; this hymn proves that his ear was perfect. Spenser's Alexandrines are fine; Milton's are more like the deepest swell of the organ.

When it is recollected that this piece was produced by the author at the age of twenty-one, all deep thinkers of fancy and sensibility must pore upon it with delighted wonder. The vigour, the grandeur, the imaginativeness of the conception; the force and maturity of language; the bound, the gathering strength, the thundering roll of the metre; the largeness of the views; the extent of the learning; the solemn and awful tones; the enthusiasm, and a certain spell in the epithets, which puts the reader into a state of mysterious excitement, may be better felt than described.

I venture to pronounce this poem far superior to the 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,' though the popular taste may not concur with me: it is much deeper; much more original; and of a nobler cast of materials. The two latter poems are mainly descriptive of the inanimate beauties of the creation: it is the grand purpose of poetry to embody invisible spirits; to give shape and form to the ideal; to bring out into palpable lines and colours the intellectual world; to associate with that which is material that which is purely spiritual; to travel into air, and open upon the fancy other creations. Fancy is but one faculty of the mind; it is a mirror, of whose impressions the transfer upon paper by the medium of language is a single operation.

Milton, before he could write the Hymn, must have already exercised and enriched all his faculties with vast and successful culture. He had travelled in those dim regions, into which young minds scarcely ever venture; and he had carried a guarded lamp with him, so as to see all around him, before and behind; yet not so peering and reckless as to destroy the religious awe. The due position of the lights and shades was never infringed upon.

This is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's Eternal King,
Of wedded Maid and Virgin Mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages[a] once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

Say, heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God!
Hast thou no verse, no hymn or solemn strain,
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now, while the heaven, by the sun's team untrod,

[a] *Sages.*
The prophets of the Old Testament.—T. Warton.

Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host[b] keep watch in squadrons bright?

See, how from far, upon the eastern road,
The star-led wisards[c] haste with odours sweet:
O, run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honour first thy lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the angel quire,
From out his secret altar touch'd with hallow'd fire[d].

THE HYMN.

It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to him,
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathise:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow;
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But he, her fears to cease[e],
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace:
She, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing:
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land[f].

[b] *Spangled host.*

A magnificent line: but these four introductory stanzas are not equal to the Hymn.

[c] *The star-led wisards.*

Wise men.—T. Warton.

[d] *From out his secret altar touch'd with hallow'd fire.*

Alluding to Isaiah vi. 6, 7.—Newton.

[e] *Fears to cease.*

I believe *cease* is seldom used as a verb active.

[f] *She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.*

Dr. Newton perhaps too nicely remarks, that for "Peace to strike a peace" is an

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around:
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstain'd with hostile blood [g];
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night,
Wherein the Prince of light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds, with wonder whist [h],
Smoothly the waters kist,
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave [i].

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence;
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer, that often warn'd them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

And, though the shady gloom [j]
Had given day her room,
The sun himself withheld his wonted speed;

inaccuracy: yet he allows that "fœdus ferire" is classical. But Roman phraseology is here quite out of the question. It is not a league, or agreement of peace between two parties, that is intended: a quick and universal diffusion is the idea. It was done as with a stroke.—T. Warton.

Yet it will perhaps be generally supposed that Milton had the "ferire fœdus," which Stephens interprets "pacem componere," in his mind.—Dunster.

[g] *The hooked chariot stood*
Unstain'd with hostile blood.

Liv. l. xxxvii. xli:—"Falcatæ quadrigæ, quibus se perturbaturum hostium aciem Antiochus crediderat, in suos terrorem verterunt."—Bowle.

Nothing can be more poetically grand than this stanza. In all Milton's noble poetry there are few passages finer than this.

[h] *The winds, with wonder whist.*

"Whist" is silenced. In Stanyhurst's Virgil, "Intentique ora tenebant" is translated, "They whisted all." B. ii. 1.—T. Warton.

[i] *While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.*

Another glorious line. The whole stanza breathes the essence of descriptive poetry.

[j] *And, though the shady gloom, &c.*

Mr. Bowle saw with me that this stanza is a copy of one in Spenser's "April:"—

And hid his head for shame,
As his inferiour flame
The new-enlighten'd world no more should need:
He saw a greater sun appear
Than his bright throne, or burning axletree could bear.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or e'er the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustick row;
Full little thought they than,
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below[k]:
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep:

When such musick sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
As never was by mortal finger strook;
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

Nature, that heard such sound[l],
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat, the aery region thrilling,
Now was almost won,
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling:
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all heaven and earth in happier union.

[i] I sawe Phœbus thrust out his golden hede
Vpon her to gaze:
But, when he saw howe broade her beames did sprede,
It did him amaze.
Hee blusht to see another sunne belowe,
Ne durst againe his fierie face outshowe, &c.—T. WARTON

[k] *That the mighty Pan*
Was kindly come to live with them below.

That is, with the shepherds on the lawn. So, in Spenser's "May," which Milton imitates in 'Lycidas:'—

I muse what account both these will make,
The one for the hire which he doth take;
And the other for leaving his lordes taske,
When great Pan account of shepheards shall aske.

We should recollect that Christ is styled a shepherd in the sacred writings. Mr. Bowle observes, that Dante calls him Jupiter, "Purgat." c. vi. v. 118; and that this passage is literally adopted by Pulci, "Morgant. Magg." c. ii. v. 2.—T. WARTON.

[l] *Nature, that heard such sound.*

I suppose this is one of the stanzas which Warton deemed a conceit. I can hardly call it so.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefaced night array'd;
The helmed cherubim,
And sworded seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes [m], to Heaven's new-born heir.

Such musick [n], as 'tis said,
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung;
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres;
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow [o];
And, with your ninefold harmony [p],
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

For, if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold;
And speckled Vanity [q]

[m] *With unexpressive notes.*

So, in 'Lycidas,' v. 176:—

And hears the unexpressive nuptial song.

The word, which is the object of this note, was perhaps coined by Shakspeare, "As you Like it," a. iii. s. 2:—

The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she.—T. WARTON.

This stanza is sublime, and in Milton's peculiar manner.

[n] *Such musick.*

This stanza also is of equal excellence; and so the stanza which follows.

[o] *And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow.*

Here is another idea caught by Milton from St. Paul's cathedral while he was a school-boy. Milton was not yet a puritan: afterwards, he and his friends the fanatics would not have allowed of so papistical an establishment as an organ and a choir, even in heaven.—T. WARTON.

I think, to name the organ, in speaking of the music of the spheres, is rather the bathos.

[p] *And, with your ninefold harmony.*

There being "nine infolded spheres," as in 'Arcades,' v. 64.—NEWTON.

[q] *And speckled Vanity, &c.*

Plainly taken from the "maculosum nefas" of Horace, Od. v. 4, 23.—JOS. WARTON.

Will sicken soon and die,
  And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day [r].

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
  Orb'd in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
  With radiant feet [s] the tissued clouds down steering [t];
And heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

But wisest Fate says no,
This must not yet be so;
  The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy,
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss;
  So both himself and us to glorify:
Yet first, to those ychain'd in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep [u];

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
  While the red fire and smouldering clouds out brake:
The aged earth aghast,
With terrour of that blast,
  Shall from the surface to the centre shake;
When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

Vanity dressed in a variety of gaudy colours. Unless he means spots, the marks of disease and corruption, and the symptoms of approaching death.—T. WARTON.

[r] *And Hell itself will pass away,*
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

The image is in Virgil, Æn. viii. 245:—

Regna recludat
Pallida, Dis invisa; superque immane barathrum
Cernatur, trepidentque immisso lumine Manes.—T. WARTON.

The Alexandrine here is sonorous and majestic.

[s] *With radiant feet.*

Isaiah lii. 7:—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings—that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"—DUNSTER.

[t] *Down steering.*

The old writers use this word simply for moving. Thus our author, in 'Samson Agonistes,' ver. 110:—

I hear
The tread of many feet steering this way.—HURD.

[u] *The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep.*

A line of great energy, elegant and sublime.—T. WARTON.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for, from this happy day,
The old dragon, under ground
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurped sway;
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swindges the scaly horrour of his folded tail [v].

The oracles [w] are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetick cell.

The lonely mountains o'er [x],
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament [y];
From haunted spring and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent:
With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn [z].

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,

[v] *Swindges the scaly horrour of his folded tail.*

This strong image is copied from the descriptions of serpents and dragons in the old romances and Ariosto. There is a fine picture by Guido, representing Michael the archangel treading on Satan, who has such a tail as is here described.—Jos. Warton.

[w] *The oracles, &c.*

Attention is irresistibly awakened and engaged by the air of solemnity and enthusiasm that reigns in this stanza and some that follow. Such is the power of true poetry, that one is almost inclined to believe the superstitions real.—Jos. Warton.

This is a noble note of Jos. Warton, who, though he had not the detached, abstruse, and curious knowledge, and deep research of his brother, had, perhaps, more sensibility of taste. Here is just enough of that dim imagery, and those mysterious epithets, to set the imagination into that magical stir, which it is the essence of true poetry to cause.

[x] *The lonely mountains o'er, &c.*

Dr. Newton observes, that this allusion to the notion of the cessation of oracles at the coming of Christ, was allowable enough in a young poet. Surely, nothing could have been more allowable in an old poet. And how poetically is it extended to the pagan divinities, and the oriental idolatries!—T. Warton.

[y] *A voice of weeping heard and loud lament.*

This is scriptural. Matt. ii. 18:—"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping," &c.—T. Warton.

[z] *The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.*

An exquisite Alexandrine, both for the imagery and the music of the metre.

The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint:
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat [a],
While each peculiar Power forgoes his wonted seat [b].

Peor and Baälim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-batter'd god of Palestine;
And mooned Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both [c],
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine:
The Libyck Hammon shrinks his horn;
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn:

And sullen Moloch, fled [d],
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue:
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue [e]:
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis [f], haste:

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,

[a] *The chill marble seems to sweat.*

Among the *prodigia* at the death of Julius Cæsar, Virgil notices, "mœstum illacrymat templis ebur, æraque sudant." Georg. i. 480.—DUNSTER.

[b] *While each peculiar Power forgoes his wonted seat.*

Virgil, Æn. ii. 351:—

Excessere omnes, adytis arisque relictis,
Di, &c.—RICHARDSON.

[c] *Heaven's queen and mother both.*

She was called "regina cœli" and "mater Deum." See Selden.—NEWTON.

[d] *And sullen Moloch, fled, &c.*

This imagery, but with less effect, was afterwards transferred into the 'Par. Lost,' b. i. 392; where these dreadful circumstances, of themselves sufficiently striking to the imagination, are only related: in our Ode, they are endued with life and action, they are put in motion before our eyes, and made subservient to a new purpose of the poet by the superinduction of a poetical fiction, to which they give occasion. Milton, like a true poet, in describing the Syrian superstitions, selects such as were most susceptible of poetical enlargement; and which, from the wildness of their ceremonies, were most interesting to the fancy.—T. WARTON.

[e] *In dismal dance about the furnace blue.*

So in "Macbeth," as Mr. Steevens has observed to me:—

And round about the caldron sing.—T. WARTON.

[f] *And the dog Anubis.*

Virgil, Æn. viii. 698:—

Omnigenumque Deum monstra, et latrator Anubis.—TODD.

Trampling the unshower'd grass[g] with lowings loud:
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
Nought but profoundest hell can be his shroud:
In vain with timbrel'd anthems dark
The sable-stoled soccrers bear his worshipt ark.

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand;
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn:
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide;
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands controul the damned crew.

So, when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave[h],
The flocking shadows pale[i]
Troop to the infernal jail;
Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave;
And the yellow-skirted fayes
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze[j].

But see, the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest:
Time is, our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemed star
Hath fix'd her polish'd car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending[k]:

[g] *Trampling the unshower'd grass.*

There being no rain in Egypt, but the country made fruitful with the overflowings of the Nile.—Richardson.

[h] *Pillows his chin upon an orient wave.*

The words "pillows" and "chin" throw an air of burlesque and familiarity over a comparison most exquisitely conceived and adapted.—T. Warton.

[i] *The flocking shadows pale, &c.*

Mr. Bowle directs us to the "Midsum. Night's Dr." a. iii. s. ult.:—

And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
That in cross-ways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone.—T. Warton.

[j] *And the yellow-skirted fayes*
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

It is a very poetical mode of expressing the departure of the fairies at the approach of morning, to say that they "fly after the steeds of Night."—T. Warton.

[k] *With handmaid lamp attending.*

Alluding, perhaps, to the parable of the ten virgins, in the Gospel.—Dunster.

And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harness'd angels [1] sit in order serviceable.

[1] *Bright-harness'd angels.*

Bright-armed. So, in Exod. xiii. 18:—"The children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt."—NEWTON.

A great critic, in speaking of Milton's smaller poems, passes over this Ode in silence, and observes, "All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance." But Odes are short compositions, and they can often attain sublimity, which is even a characteristic of that species of poetry. We have the proof before us. He adds, "Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace." If by "little things" we are to understand short poems, Milton had the art of giving them another sort of excellence.—T. WARTON.

Here Warton does justice to this sublime Hymn. In this piece are all the constituents of poetry, including high and solemn invention: the imagery is also poetical; the metrical combination of the words rises like the gathering force of a flood, or rather of the careering winds. Milton had already learned to amalgamate his ideal riches, and cast them in a mould of his own.

THE PASSION.

This Ode, or rather Elegy, is unaccountably inferior to the preceding Hymn, and unworthy of Milton: indeed, the poet, by leaving it unfinished, and by his note at the end, seems himself to have thought so: one wonders, therefore, that, with such an impression on his own part, he printed it. The language is of an humbler cast, and more like the common poets of his day.

EREWHILE of musick, and ethereal mirth [a],
Wherewith the stage of air and earth did ring,
And joyous news of heavenly Infant's birth,
My Muse with angels did divide to sing [b];
But headlong joy is ever on the wing [c];
In wintry solstice, like the shorten'd light,
Soon swallow'd up in dark and long out-living night.

For now to sorrow must I tune my song,
And set my harp to notes of saddest woe,
Which on our dearest Lord did seize ere long,
Dangers, and snares, and wrongs, and worse than so,
Which he for us did freely undergo:

[a] *Erewhile of musick, and ethereal mirth.*

Hence we may conjecture that this Ode was probably composed soon after that on the Nativity: and this perhaps was a college-exercise at Easter, as the last was at Christmas.—T. WARTON.

[b] *My Muse with angels did divide to sing.*

See Spenser, "Faer. Qu." III. i. 40:—

And all the while sweet musicke did divide
Her looser notes with Lydian harmony.

As Horace, "Imbelli cithara carmina divides." Od. I. xv. 15.—T. WARTON.

[c] *But headlong joy is ever on the wing.*

An elegant and expressive line.—T. WARTON.

Most perfect Hero[d], tried in heaviest plight
Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight!

He, sovran Priest, stooping his regal head,
That dropt with odorous oil down his fair eyes,
Poor fleshly tabernacle entered,
His starry front low-roofed beneath the skies:
O, what a mask was there, what a disguise!
Yet more; the stroke of death he must abide;
Then lies him meekly down fast by his brethren's side.

These latest scenes confine my roving verse;
To this horizon is my Phœbus bound:
His godlike acts, and his temptations fierce,
And former sufferings, other where are found;
Loud o'er the rest Cremona's trump[e] doth sound:
Me softer airs befit, and softer strings
Of lute, or viol still, more apt for mournful things.

Befriend me, Night, best patroness of grief;
Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw,
And work my flatter'd fancy to belief,
That heaven and earth are colour'd with my woe;
My sorrows are too dark for day to know:
The leaves should all be black whereon I write;
And letters[f], where my tears have wash'd, a wannish white.

See, see the chariot, and those rushing wheels,
That whirl'd the prophet up at Chebar flood;
My spirit some transporting cherub feels,
To bear me where the towers of Salem stood,
Once glorious towers, now sunk in guiltless blood:
There doth my soul in holy vision sit,
In pensive trance, and anguish, and ecstatic fit.

Mine eye hath found that sad sepulchral rock
That was the casket of Heaven's richest store;
And here, though grief my feeble hands up lock,
Yet on the soften'd quarry would I score
My plaining verse as lively as before;

[d] *Most perfect Hero.*

From Heb. ii. 10:—"The captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."—Todd.

[e] *Loud o'er the rest Cremona's trump.*

Our poet seems here to be of opinion, that Vida's "Christiad" was the finest Latin poem on a religious subject.—Jos. Warton.

[f] *The leaves should all be black whereon I write,*
And letters, &c.

Conceits were now confined not to words only. Mr. Steevens has a volume of Elegies in which the paper is black, and the letters white; that is, in all the title-pages: every intermediate leaf is also black. What a sudden change from this childish idea, to the noble apostrophe, the sublime rapture and imagination, of the next stanza!—T. Warton.

For sure so well instructed are my tears,
That they would fitly fall in order'd characters.

Or should I thence, hurried on viewless wing,
Take up a weeping on the mountains wild[g],
The gentle neighbourhood of grove and spring
Would soon unbosom all their echoes mild[h];
And I (for grief is easily beguiled)
Might think the infection of my sorrows loud
Had got a race of mourners on some pregnant cloud.

This subject the author finding to be above the years he had, when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished.

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[g] *Take up a weeping on the mountains wild.*

This expression is from Jeremiah ix. 10:—"For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing," &c.—T. WARTON.

[h] *The gentle neighbourhood of grove and spring*
Would soon unbosom all their echoes mild.

A sweetly beautiful couplet, which, with the two preceding lines, opened the stanza so well, that I particularly grieve to find it terminate feebly in a most miserably disgusting *concetto.*—DUNSTER.

ODES.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE Minor Poems which follow are not of sufficient length or importance to demand or justify a separate introduction to each.

The 'Circumcision' is better than the 'Passion,' and has two or three Miltonic lines.

The 'Elegy on the Death of a fair Infant' is praised by Warton, and well characterised in his last note upon it; but it has more of research and laboured fancy than of feeling, and is not a general favourite.

The Ode, or rather fragment, 'On Time,' closes with three noble and sonorous lines.

The 'Ode at a Solemn Musick' is a short prelude to the strain of Genius which produced 'Paradise Lost.' Warton says, that perhaps there are no finer lines in Milton than one long passage which he cites. I must say that this is going a little too far. That they are very fine, I admit; but the sublime philosophy, to which he alludes as their prototype, must not be put in comparison with the fountains of 'Paradise Lost.' So far they are exceedingly curious, that they show how early the poet had constructed in his own mind the language of his divine imagery, and how rich and vigorous his style was almost in his boyhood; as this:—

Where the bright seraphim, in burning row,
Their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow;
And the cherubick host, in thousand quires,
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires.

The 'Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester' does not much please me: I do not like its quaint conceits, nor its want of pathos. The third line,—

A viscount's daughter, an earl's heir,

is equivocally expressed. It means the daughter of a viscount, which viscount was heir to an earl. See T. Warton's note on ver. 59. Thomas, Lord Darcie, of

Chiche, in Essex, was created Viscount Colchester, 19 James I., with a collateral remainder to Sir Thomas Savage, of Rock-savage, in Cheshire, who had married Elizabeth Laughton; and at length coheir of the said Thomas Lord Darcie; and in the second Charles I. he was created Earl Rivers, with the same remainder. Thus this Sir Thomas Savage was called Viscount Colchester, and was heir to an earldom; but he did not succeed to it, for he died in 1635, before his father-in-law, who survived till 1639, when his son, Sir John Savage, second baronet (the brother of the marchioness), became second Earl Rivers, and died 1654. He had three sons, and five daughters: Jane, the second daughter, married, first, George Brydges, sixth Lord Chandos; secondly, Sir William Sedley; thirdly, George Pitt, of Strathfield-say, in Hampshire; and having obtained Sudely castle from her first husband, left it to this third husband, Mr. Pitt. The Marchioness of Winchester was mother of Charles Powlett, first Duke of Bolton, whose daughter, Lady Jane, married John Egerton, third Earl of Bridgewater, from whom all the subsequent peers of that title descended. Thomas Savage, third Earl Rivers, dying 1694, was succeeded by his son Richard, fourth earl, who died without issue male, 1712.* He was succeeded by his cousin, John, son of Richard Savage, third son of the second earl. The title became extinct in 1728. I take the date of this Epitaph to have been 1631, for a reason given by me in "The Topographer," 1789, vol. i. which Todd has referred to.

The 'Song on May Morning' is in the tone of the beautifully descriptive passages in 'Comus.'

The 'Verses at a Vacation Exercise in the College' are full of ingenuity and imagery, and have several fine passages; but, though they blame "new-fangled toys" with a noble disdain, they are themselves in many parts too fantastic.

As to the 'Epitaph on Shakspeare,' Hurd despises it too much. It is true, that it is neither equal to the grand cast of Milton's poems, nor worthy of the subject; but still it would honour most poets, except the last four lines, which are a poor conceit.

The two strange 'Epitaphs on Hobson the Carrier' are unworthy of the author.

The rough lines on the 'New Forcers of Conscience' are interesting on account of the historical notes of Warton, to which they have given occasion.

The 'Translations' are scarcely worth notice, except the Ode of Horace, which has a plain and native vigour.

Of the 'Psalms' I have said all that is necessary in the poet's Life.

UPON THE CIRCUMCISION.

Ye flaming powers, and winged warriours bright,
That erst with musick, and triumphant song,
First heard by happy watchful shepherds' ear,
So sweetly sung your joy the clouds along
Through the soft silence of the listening night;
Now mourn; and, if sad share with us to bear
Your fiery essence can distil no tear,
Burn in your sighs*, and borrow
Seas wept from our deep sorrow:

* Richard Savage, the poet, was, or claimed to be, his natural son, by the Countess of Macclesfield.

* *Your fiery essence can distil no tear,*
Burn in your sighs.

Milton is puzzled how to reconcile the transcendent essence of angels with the infirmities of men. In 'Paradise Lost,' having made the angel Gabriel share in a repast of fruit with Adam, he finds himself under a necessity of getting rid of an obvious objection, that material food does not belong to intellectual or ethereal substances: and to avoid certain circumstances, humiliating and disgraceful to the dignity of the angelic nature, the natural consequences of concoction and digestion, he forms a new theory of transpiration, suggested by the wonderful transmutations of

He, who with all Heaven's heraldry whilere
Enter'd the world, now bleeds to give us ease:
Alas, how soon our sin
Sore doth begin
His infancy to seize!
O more exceeding love, or law more just?
Just law indeed, but more exceeding love[b]!
For we, by rightful doom remediless,
Were lost in death, till he that dwelt above
High throned in secret bliss, for us frail dust
Emptied his glory[c], ev'n to nakedness;
And that great covenant which we still transgress
Entirely satisfied;
And the full wrath beside
Of vengeful justice, bore for our excess;
And seals obedience first, with wounding smart,
This day; but O! ere long,
Huge pangs and strong
Will pierce more near his heart.

ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT[d], DYING OF A COUGH.

O FAIREST flower, no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken primrose fading timelessly,
Summer's chief honour, if thou hadst out-lasted
Bleak Winter's force that made thy blossom dry;
For he, being amorous on that lovely dye
That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss,
But kill'd, alas! and then bewail'd his fatal bliss.

For since grim Aquilo[e], his charioteer,
By boisterous rape the Athenian damsel got,
He thought it touch'd his deity full near,
If likewise he some fair one wedded not,
Thereby to wipe away the infamous blot

chemistry. In the present instance, he wishes to make angels weep: but, being of the essence of fire, they cannot produce water: at length, he recollects that fire may produce burning sighs. It is debated in Thomas Aquinas whether angels have not, or may not have, beards.—T. WARTON.

[b] *O more exceeding love, or law more just?*
Just law indeed, but more exceeding love!

Virgil, Ecl. viii. 49:—

Crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille?
Improbus ille puer; crudelis tu quoque mater.—RICHARDSON.

[c] *Emptied his glory.*

An expression taken from Philipp. ii. 7, but not as in our translation:—"He made himself of no reputation;" but, as it is in the original, "He emptied himself."—NEWTON.

[d] Written in 1625, and first inserted in edition 1673. He was now seventeen.—T. WARTON.

[e] *For since grim Aquilo, &c.*

Boreas ravished Orithyia. Ovid. Metam. vi. 677.—T. WARTON.

Of long-uncoupled bed and childless eld,
Which, 'mongst the wanton gods, a foul reproach was held.

So, mounting up in icy-pearled car,
Through middle empire of the freezing air
He wander'd long, till thee he spied from far;
There ended was his quest, there ceased his care.
Down he descended from his snow-soft chair;
But, all unwares, with his cold-kind embrace
Unhoused thy virgin soul from her fair biding-place.

Yet art thou not inglorious in thy fate;
For so Apollo, with unweeting hand,
Whilom did slay his dearly-loved mate,
Young Hyacinth[f], born on Eurotas' strand,
Young Hyacinth, the pride of Spartan land;
But then transform'd him to a purple flower:
Alack, that so to change thee Winter had no power!

Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,
Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb,
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,
Hid from the world in a low-delved tomb.
Could Heaven for pity thee so strictly doom?
O, no! for something in thy face did shine
Above mortality, that show'd thou wast divine.

Resolve me then, O soul most surely blest
(If so it be that thou these plaints dost hear),
Tell me, bright spirit, where'er thou hoverest;
Whether above that high first-moving sphere,
Or in the Elysian fields (if such there were[g]),
O, say me true, if thou wert mortal wight,
And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight?

Wert thou some star, which from the ruin'd roof
Of shaked Olympus by mischance didst fall;

[f] *For so Apollo, with unweeting hand,*
Whilom did slay his dearly-loved mate,
Young Hyacinth.

From these lines one would suspect, although it does not immediately follow, that a boy was the subject of the ode: but in the last stanza the poet says expressly:—

Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child,
Her false-imagined loss cease to lament.

Yet, in the eighth stanza the person lamented is alternately supposed to have been sent down to earth in the shape of two divinities, one of whom is styled a "just maid," and the other a "sweet-smiling youth." But the child was certainly a niece, a daughter of Milton's sister Philips, and probably her first child.—T. WARTON.

[g] *If such there were.*

He should have said "are," if the rhyme had permitted.—HURD.

Which careful Jove in Nature's true behoof
Took up, and in fit place did reinstall?
Or did of late Earth's sons besiege the wall
Of sheeny Heaven, and thou some goddess fled,
Amongst us here below to hide thy nectar'd head?

Or wert thou that just maid, who once before
Forsook the hated earth, O, tell me sooth,
And camest again to visit us once more?
Or wert thou that sweet-smiling youth?
Or that crown'd matron sage, white-robed Truth?
Or any other of that heavenly brood,
Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?

Or wert thou of the golden-winged host,
Who, having clad thyself in human weed,
To earth from thy prefixed seat didst post,
And after short abode fly back with speed,
As if to show what creatures heaven doth breed;
Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the sordid world, and unto heaven aspire?

But, O! why didst thou not stay here below
To bless us with thy Heaven-loved innocence,
To slake his wrath whom sin hath made our foe,
To turn swift-rushing black Perdition hence,
Or drive away the slaughtering Pestilence[h],
To stand 'twixt us and our deserved smart?
But thou canst best perform that office where thou art.

Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child,
Her false-imagined loss cease to lament,
And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild:
Think what a present thou to God hast sent,
And render him with patience what he lent.
This, if thou do, he will an offspring give,
That, till the world's last end shall make thy name to live.

[h] *To turn swift-rushing black Perdition hence,*
Or drive away the slaughtering Pestilence.

Among the blessings, which the "heaven-loved" innocence of this child might have imparted, by remaining upon earth, the application to present circumstances, the supposition that she might have averted the pestilence now raging in the kingdom, is happily and beautifully conceived. On the whole, from a boy of seventeen, this Ode is an extraordinary effort of fancy, expression, and versification: even in the conceits, which are many, we perceive strong and peculiar marks of genius. I think Milton has here given a very remarkable specimen of his ability to succeed in the Spenserian stanza. He moves with great ease and address amidst the embarrassment of a frequent return of rhyme.—T. Warton.

ON TIME[i].

Fly, envious Time, till thou run out thy race;
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross;
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain!
For when as each thing bad thou hast entomb'd,
And last of all thy greedy self consumed,
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual[j] kiss;
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood;
When every thing that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine,
With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever shine
About the supreme throne
Of him, to whose happy-making sight alone
When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb;
Then, all this earthy grossness quit,
Attired with stars, we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O Time[k].

AT A SOLEMN MUSICK.

Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy;
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse;
Wed your divine sounds, and mix'd power employ
Dead things with imbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure concent[l],

[i] In Milton's manuscript, written with his own hand, fol. 8, the title is, 'On Time. To be set on a clock-case.'—T. Warton.

[j] *Individual.*

Eternal, inseparable. As in 'Paradise Lost,' b. iv. 485, b. v. 610.—T. Warton.

[k] Milton could not help applying the most solemn and mysterious truths of religion on all subjects and occasions. He has here introduced the beatific vision, and the investiture of the soul with a robe of stars into an inscription on a clock-case. Perhaps something more moral, more plain and intelligible, would have been more proper. John Bunyan, if capable of rhyming, would have written such an inscription for a clock-case. The latter part of these lines may be thought wonderfully sublime; but it is in the cant of the times. The poet should be distinguished from the enthusiast.—T. Warton.

Yet still, I think, Milton is here no enthusiast: the triumph, which he mentions, will certainly be the triumph of every sincere Christian.—Todd.

[l] *That undisturbed song of pure concent, &c.*

The "undisturbed song of pure concent" is the diapason of the music of the spheres, to which, in Plato's system, God himself listens.—T. Warton.

Aye sung before the sapphire-colour'd throne
To him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright seraphim, in burning row,
Their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow;
And the cherubick host, in thousand quires,
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly:
That we on earth [m], with undiscording voice,
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportion'd sin
Jarr'd against Nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair musick that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
O, may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long
To his celestial concert us unite,
To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light!

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER.

This rich marble doth inter
The honour'd wife of Winchester,
A viscount's daughter, an earl's heir,
Besides what her virtues fair [n]
Added to her noble birth,
More than she could own from earth.
Summers three times eight save one
She had told; alas! too soon,
After so short time of breath,
To house with darkness and with death.
Yet had the number of her days
Been as complete as was her praise,
Nature and Fate had had no strife
In giving limit to her life.

[m] *That we on earth, &c.*

Perhaps there are no finer lines in Milton, less obscured by conceit, less embarrassed by affected expressions, and less weakened by pompous epithets: and in this perspicuous and simple style are conveyed some of the noblest ideas of a most sublime philosophy, heightened by metaphors and allusions suitable to the subject.—T. Warton.

[n] *Besides what her virtues fair, &c.*

In Howell's entertaining Letters, there is one to this lady, the Lady Jane Savage, Marchioness of Winchester, dated March 15, 1626. He says, he assisted her in learning Spanish; and that Nature and the Graces exhausted all their treasure and skill in "framing this exact model of female perfection."—T. Warton.

Her high birth, and her graces sweet,
Quickly found a lover meet [o];
The virgin quire for her request
The god that sits at marriage feast:
He at their invoking came,
But with a scarce well-lighted flame [p];
And in his garland, as he stood,
Ye might discern a cypress bud [q].
Once had the early matrons run
To greet her of a lovely son;
And now with second hope she goes,
And calls Lucina to her throes:
But, whether by mischance or blame,
Atropos for Lucina came;
And with remorseless cruelty
Spoil'd at once both fruit and tree:
The hapless babe, before his birth,
Had burial, yet not laid in earth;
And the languish'd mother's womb
Was not long a living tomb.
So have I seen some tender slip,
Saved with care from winter's nip,
The pride of her carnation train,
Pluck'd up by some unheedy swain,
Who only thought to crop the flower
New shot up from vernal shower;
But the fair blossom hangs the head
Sideways, as on a dying bed;
And those pearls of dew she wears
Prove to be presaging tears,
Which the sad morn had let fall
On her hastening funeral.

[o] *Her high birth, and her graces sweet,*
Quickly found a lover meet.

She was the wife of John, Marquis of Winchester, a conspicuous loyalist in the reign of King Charles I., whose magnificent house or castle of Basing in Hampshire withstood an obstinate siege of two years against the rebels, and when taken was levelled to the ground, because in every window was flourished *Aymez Loyauté*. He died in 1674, and was buried in the church of Englefield in Berkshire; where, on his monument, is an admirable epitaph in English verse written by Dryden, which I have often seen. It is remarkable that both husband and wife should have severally received the honour of an epitaph from two such poets as Milton and Dryden.—T. Warton.

[p] *He at their invoking came,*
But with a scarce well-lighted flame.

Almost literally from his favourite poet Ovid, Metam. x. 4, of Hymen:—

Adfuit ille quidem: sed nec solennia verba,
Nec lætos vultus, nec felix attulit omen:
Fax quoque quam tenuit, lacrymoso stridula fumo,
Usque fuit, nullosque invenit motibus ignes.—T. Warton.

[q] *Ye might discern a cypress bud.*

An emblem of a funeral; and it is called in Virgil "feralis," Æn. vi. 216, and in Horace, "funebris," Epod. v. 18, and in Spenser "the cypress funeral," Faer. Qu. i. i. 8.—Newton.

Gentle lady, may thy grave
Peace and quiet ever have;
After this thy travel sore
Sweet rest seize thee evermore,
That, to give the world increase
Shorten'd hast thy own life's lease.
Here, besides the sorrowing
That thy noble house doth bring,
Here be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon;
And some flowers, and some bays,
For thy herse, to strow the ways,
Sent thee from the banks of Came [r],
Devoted to thy virtuous name;
Whilst thou, bright saint, high sitt'st in glory,
Next her, much like to thee in story,
That fair Syrian shepherdess [s],
Who, after years of barrenness,
The highly-favour'd Joseph bore
To him that served for her before;
And at her next birth, much like thee,
Through pangs fled to felicity [t],
Far within the bosom bright
Of blazing Majesty and Light:
There with thee, new welcome saint,
Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,
With thee there clad in radiant sheen,
No marchioness, but now a queen.

[r] *Sent thee from the banks of Came.*

I have been told that there was a Cambridge collection of verses on her death, among which Milton's elegiac ode first appeared: but I have never seen it, and I rather think this was not the case: at least, we are sure that Milton was now a student at Cambridge. Our marchioness was the daughter of Thomas, Lord Viscount Savage, of Rock-savage in Cheshire; and it is natural to suppose, that her family was well acquainted with the family of Lord Bridgewater, belonging to the same county, for whom Milton wrote the mask of 'Comus.' It is therefore not improbable that Milton wrote this elegy, another poetical favour, in consequence of his acquaintance with the Egerton family. The accomplished lady, here celebrated, died in child-bed of a second son in her twenty-third year, and was the mother of Charles, the first Duke of Bolton.—T. WARTON.

[s] *That fair Syrian shepherdess.*

Rachel. See Gen. xxix. 9; xxxv. 18.—T. WARTON.

[t] *Through pangs fled to felicity.*

We cannot too much admire the beauty of this line: I wish it had closed the poem; which it would have done with singular effect. What follows serves only to weaken it; and the last verse is an eminent instance of the bathos, where the "saint clad in radiant sheen" sinks into a marchioness and a queen: but Milton seldom closes his little poems well.—DUNSTER.

There is a pleasing vein of lyric sweetness and ease in Milton's use of this metre, which is that of 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso:' he has used it with equal success in Comus's festive song, and the last speech of the Spirit, in 'Comus,' 93, 922. From these specimens we may justly wish that he had used it more frequently. Perhaps in Comus's song it has a peculiar propriety: it has certainly a happy effect.—T. WARTON.

SONG ON MAY MORNING.

Now the bright morning-star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
  Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
  Mirth, and youth, and warm desire;
  Woods and groves are of thy dressing;
  Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing!
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

This beautiful little song presents an eminent proof of Milton's attention to the effect of metre, in that admirable change of numbers, with which he describes the appearance of the May morning, and salutes her after she has appeared; as different as the subject is, and produced by the transition from iambics to trochaics. So in 'L'Allegro,' he banishes Melancholy in iambics, but invites Euphrosyne and her attendants in trochaics.—TODD.

MISCELLANIES.

ANNO ÆTATIS XIX.

At a vacation Exercise[a] in the College, part Latin, part English. The Latin speeches ended, the English thus began:—

HAIL, native Language, that by sinews weak
Didst move my first endeavouring tongue to speak;
And madest imperfect words with childish trips,
Half unpronounced, slide through my infant lips;
Driving dumb Silence from the portal door,
Where he had mutely sat two years before!
Here I salute thee, and thy pardon ask,
That now I use thee in my latter task:
Small loss it is that thence can come unto thee;
I know my tongue but little grace can do thee:
Thou need'st not be ambitious to be first;
Believe me, I have thither pack'd the worst:
And if it happen as I did forecast,
The daintiest dishes shall be served up last.
I pray thee, then, deny me not thy aid
For this same small neglect that I have made:
But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
And from thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure;

[a] Written in 1627: it is hard to say why these poems did not first appear in edition 1645. They were first added, but misplaced, in edition 1673.—T. WARTON.

Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming slight,
Which takes our late fantasticks with delight[b];
But cull those richest robes, and gayest attire,
Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire.
I have some naked thoughts that rove about,
And loudly knock to have their passage out;
And, weary of their place, do only stay,
Till thou hast deck'd them in thy best array;
That so they may, without suspect or fears,
Fly swiftly to this fair assembly's ears:
Yet I had rather, if I were to chuse,
Thy service in some graver subject use[c],
Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,
Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound:
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at heaven's door
Look in, and see each blissful deity,
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
Listening to what unshorn Apollo[d] sings
To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
Immortal nectar to her kingly sire:
Then passing through the spheres of watchful fire[e],
And misty regions of wide air next under,
And hills of snow, and lofts of piled thunder,
May tell at length how green-eyed Neptune[f] raves,
In Heaven's defiance mustering all his waves;

[b] *Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming slight,*
Which takes our late fantasticks with delight.

Perhaps he here alludes to Lily's "Euphues," a book full of affected phraseology, which pretended to reform or refine the English language; and whose effects, although it was published some years before, still remained. The ladies and the courtiers were all instructed in this new style: and it was esteemed a mark of ignorance or unpoliteness not to understand Euphuism.—T. Warton.

[c] *Yet I had rather, if I were to chuse,*
Thy service in some graver subject use, &c.

It appears, by this address of Milton to his native language, that even in these green years he had the ambition to think of writing an epic poem; and it is worth the curious reader's attention to observe how much the 'Paradise Lost' corresponds in its circumstances to the prophetic wish he now formed.—Thyer.

Here are strong indications of a young mind anticipating the subject of the 'Paradise Lost,' if we substitute Christian for pagan ideas. He was now deep in the Greek poets.—T. Warton.

[d] *Unshorn Apollo.*

An epithet, by which he is distinguished in the Greek and Latin poets.—Newton.

[e] *Watchful fire.*

See 'Ode, Chr. Nativity,' v. 21:—"And all the spangled host keep watch in order bright."—Hurd.

We have "vigil flamma" in Ovid, Trist. iii. v. 4: and "vigiles flammas," Art. Am. iii. 463.—T. Warton.

[f] *Green-eyed Neptune.*

Virgil, Georg. iv. 451. Of Proteus:—

Ardentes oculos intorsit lumine glauco.—T. Warton.

Then sing of secret things that came to pass
When beldam Nature in her cradle was;
And last of kings, and queens, and heroes old,
Such as the wise Demodocus once told[g]
In solemn songs at king Alcinous' feast,
While sad Ulysses' soul, and all the rest,
Are held, with his melodious harmony,
In willing chains and sweet captivity.
But fie, my wandering Muse, how thou dost stray!
Expectance calls thee now another way:
Thou know'st it must be now thy only bent
To keep in compass of thy predicament;
Then quick about thy purposed business come,
That to the next I may resign my room.

Then ENS is represented as father of the Predicaments, his ten sons, whereof the eldest stood for Substance with his canons, which ENS, thus speaking, explains:—

Good luck befriend thee, son[h]; for, at thy birth,
The faery ladies danced upon the hearth[i];
Thy drowsy nurse hath sworn she did them spie
Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie;
And, sweetly singing round-about thy bed,
Strow all their blessings on thy sleeping head.
She heard them give thee this, that thou shouldst still
From eyes of mortals walk invisible:
Yet there is something that doth force my fear;
For once it was my dismal hap to hear
A sibyl old, bow-bent with crooked age,
That far events full wisely could presage,
And in time's long and dark prospective glass
Foresaw what future days should bring to pass;
Your son, said she, nor can you it prevent,
Shall subject be to many an Accident[j]:

[g] *Such as the wise Demodocus once told.*

He now little thought that Homer's beautiful couplet of the fate of Demodocus could, in a few years, with so much propriety be applied to himself. He was but too conscious of his resemblance to some other Greek bards of antiquity when he wrote the 'Paradise Lost.' See b. iii. 33, seq.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Good luck befriend thee, son, &c.*

Here the metaphysical or logical Ens is introduced as a person, and addressing his eldest son Substance; afterwards the logical Quantity, Quality, and Relation, are personified, and speak. This affectation will appear more excusable in Milton, if we recollect that every thing, in the masks of this age, appeared in a bodily shape. "Airy nothing" had not only a "local habitation and a name," but a visible figure.—T. WARTON.

[i] *For, at thy birth,*
The faery ladies danced upon the hearth.

This is the first and last time that the system of the fairies was ever introduced to illustrate the doctrine of Aristotle's ten categories. It may be remarked that they both were in fashion, and both exploded, at the same time.—T. WARTON.

[j] *Shall subject be to many an Accident.*

A pun on the logical Accidens.—T. WARTON.

O'er all his brethren he shall reign as king[k],
Yet every one shall make him underling;
And those, that cannot live from him asunder,
Ungratefully shall strive to keep him under[l]:
In worth and excellence he shall outgo them;
Yet, being above them, he shall be below them;
From others he shall stand in need of nothing[m],
Yet on his brothers shall depend for clothing[n]:
To find a foe it shall not be his hap[o],
And Peace shall lull him in her flowery lap;
Yet shall he live in strife, and at his door
Devouring War shall never cease to roar;
Yea, it shall be his natural property
To harbour those that are at enmity[p].
What power, what force, what mighty spell, if not
Your learned hands, can loose this Gordian knot?

The next, QUANTITY and QUALITY, spake in prose; then RELATION was called by his name.

Rivers, arise[q]; whether thou be the son
Of utmost Tweed, or Oose, or gulphy Dun,
Or Trent, who, like some Earth-born giant, spreads
His thirty arms along the indented meads[r];
Or sullen Mole, that runneth underneath[s];
Or Severn swift, guilty of maiden's death[t];

[k] *O'er all his brethren he shall reign as king.*

The Predicaments are his brethren; of or to which he is the Subjectum, although first in excellence and order.—T. WARTON.

[l] *Ungratefully shall strive to keep him under.*

They cannot exist, but as inherent in Substance.—T. WARTON.

[m] *From others he shall stand in need of nothing.*

He is still Substance, with or without Accident.—T. WARTON.

[n] *Yet on his brothers shall depend for clothing.*

By whom he is clothed, superinduced, modified, &c.: but he is still the same.—T. WARTON.

[o] "Substantia substantiæ novæ contrariatur," is a school maxim.—T. WARTON.

[p] *To harbour those that are at enmity.*

His accidents.—T. WARTON.

[q] *Rivers, arise, &c.*

Milton is supposed, in the invocation and assemblage of these rivers, to have had an eye on Spenser's episode of the nuptials of Thames and Medway, "Faery Queene," IV. xi. I rather think he consulted Drayton's "Polyolbion." It is hard to say, in what sense, or in what manner, this introduction of the rivers was to be applied to the subject.—T. WARTON.

[r] *Or Trent, who, like some Earth-born giant, spreads*
His thirty arms along the indented meads.

It is said that there were thirty sorts of fish in this river, and thirty religious houses on its banks. These traditions, on which Milton has raised a noble image, are a rebus on the name Trent.—T. WARTON.

[s] *Or sullen Mole, that runneth underneath.*

At Mickleham, near Dorking, in Surrey, the river Mole, during the summer, except in heavy rains, sinks through its sandy bed into a subterraneous and invisible channel. In winter it constantly keeps its current.—T. WARTON.

[t] *Or Severn swift, guilty of maiden's death.*

The maiden is Sabrina. See 'Comus,' v. 827.—T. WARTON.

Or rocky Avon, or of sedgy Lee,
Or coaly Tine, or ancient hallow'd Dee [u];
Or Humber loud, that keeps the Scythian's name [v];
Or Medway smooth, or royal-tower'd Thame [w].

[The rest was prose.]

AN EPITAPH ON THE ADMIRABLE DRAMATIC POET WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE[x].

WHAT needs my Shakspeare, for his honour'd bones,
The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of Memory [y], great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,
Hast built thyself a live-long monument,
For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,
Thy easy numbers flow; and that each heart
Hath, from the leaves of thy unvalued book [z],
Those Delphick lines with deep impression took:
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
And, so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
That kings, for such a tomb, would wish to die.

[u] *Ancient hallow'd Dee.*

Dee's divinity was Druidical. From the same superstition, some rivers in Wales are still held to have the gift or virtue of prophecy. See note on 'Lycidas,' ver. 55.—T. WARTON.

[v] *Or Humber loud, that keeps the Scythian's name.*

Humber, a Scythian king, landed in Britain three hundred years before the Roman invasion, and was drowned in this river by Locrine, after conquering King Albanact.—T. WARTON.

[w] *Or Medway smooth, or royal-tower'd Thame.*

The smoothness of the Medway is characterised in the "Mourning Muse of Thestylis." The royal towers of Thames imply Windsor castle, familiar to Milton's view, and to which I have already remarked his allusions.—T. WARTON.

[x] This is but an ordinary poem to come from Milton, on such a subject; but he did not yet know his own strength, or was content to dissemble it, out of deference to the false taste of his time. The conceit of Shakspeare's "Lying sepulchred in a tomb of his own making," is in Waller's manner, not his own. But he made Shakspeare amends in his 'L'Allegro,' v. 133.—HURD.

Birch, and from him Dr. Newton, asserts, that this copy of verses was written in the twenty-second year of Milton's age, and printed with the Poems of Shakspeare at London in 1640. This therefore is the first of Milton's pieces that was published. We have here restored the title from the second folio of Shakspeare, printed 1632.—T. WARTON.

This epitaph is dated 1630, in Milton's own edition of his poems in 1673.—TODD.

[y] *Dear Son of Memory.*

He honours his favourite Shakspeare with the same relation as the Muses themselves, for the Muses are called, by the old poets, "the daughters of Memory." See Hesiod, "Theog." v. 53.—NEWTON.

[z] *The leaves of thy unvalued book.*

"Thy invaluable book." So in Shakspeare, "Rich. III." a. i. s. 4:—

Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels.—TODD.

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER,

Who sickened in the time of his vacancy, being forbid to go to London by reason of the plague.

Here lies old Hobson; Death hath broke his girt,
And here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt;
Or else, the ways being foul, twenty to one,
He's here stuck in a slough, and overthrown.
'Twas such a shifter, that, if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down:
For he had, any time this ten years full,
Dodged with him betwixt Cambridge and the Bull:
And surely Death could never have prevail'd,
Had not his weekly course of carriage fail'd;
But lately finding him so long at home,
And thinking how his journey's end was come,
And that he had ta'en up his latest inn;
In the kind office of a chamberlin[a]
Show'd him his room where he must lodge that night,
Pull'd off his boots, and took away the light:
If any ask for him, it shall be sed,
Hobson has supp'd, and 's newly gone to bed.

ANOTHER ON THE SAME[b].

Here lieth one, who did most truly prove
That he could never die while he could move;
So hung his destiny, never to rot
While he might still jog on and keep his trot,
Made of sphere-metal, never to decay
Until his revolution was at stay.
Time numbers motion; yet, without a crime
'Gainst old truth, motion number'd out his time;
And, like an engine moved with wheel and weight,
His principles being ceased, he ended straight.
Rest that gives all men life, gave him his death,
And too much breathing put him out of breath;
Nor were it contradiction to affirm,
Too long vacation hasten'd on his term.
Merely to drive the time away, he sicken'd,
Fainted, and died, nor would with ale be quicken'd;

[a] *In the kind office of a chamberlin, &c.*
I believe the chamberlain is an officer not yet discontinued in some of the old inns in the city.—T. Warton.

[b] Hobson's inn at London was the Bull in Bishopsgate-street, where his figure in fresco, with an inscription, was lately to be seen. Peck, at the end of his "Memoirs of Cromwell," has printed Hobson's will, which is dated at the close of the year 1630. He died Jan. 1, 1630, while the plague was in London. This piece was written that year.—T. Warton.

Nay, quoth he, on his swooning bed outstretch'd,
If I mayn't carry, sure I'll ne'er be fetch'd;
But vow, though the cross doctors all stood hearers,
For one carrier put down to make six bearers.
Ease was his chief disease; and, to judge right,
He died for heaviness that his cart went light:
His leisure told him that his time was come,
And lack of load made his life burdensome,
That ev'n to his last breath, there be that say't,
As he were press'd to death, he cried, More weight!
But, had his doings lasted as they were,
He had been an immortal carrier.
Obedient to the moon, he spent his date
In course reciprocal, and had his fate
Link'd to the mutual flowing of the seas;
Yet, strange to think, his wain was his increase:
His letters are deliver'd all and gone;
Only remains this superscription.

ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

Because you have thrown off your prelate lord [c],
And with stiff vows renounced his liturgy [d],
To seize the widow'd whore Plurality
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorr'd;
Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword
To force our consciences that Christ set free,
And ride us with a classic hierarchy [e]

[c] *Because you have thrown off your prelate lord, &c.*

In railing at establishments, Milton condemned not episcopacy only: he thought even the simple institutions of the new reformation too rigid and arbitrary for the natural freedom of conscience; he contended for that sort of individual or personal religion, by which every man is to be his own priest. When these verses were written, which form an irregular sonnet, Presbyterianism was triumphant: and the Independents and the Churchmen joined in one common complaint against a want of toleration. The church of Calvin had now its heretics. Milton's haughty temper brooked no human control: even the parliamentary hierarchy was too coercive for one who acknowledged only King Jesus. His froward and refining philosophy was contented with no species of carnal policy: conformity of all sorts was slavery. He was persuaded that the modern presbyter was as much calculated for persecution and oppression as the ancient bishop.—T. Warton.

[d] *And with stiff vows renounced his liturgy.*

The Directory was enforced under severe penalties in 1644. The legislature prohibited the use of the Book of Common Prayer, not only in places of public worship, but in private families.—T. Warton.

[e] *And ride us with a classic hierarchy.*

In the Presbyterian church now established by law, there were, among others, classical assemblies: the kingdom of England, instead of so many dioceses, was now divided into a certain number of provinces, made up of representatives from the several classes within their respective boundaries: every parish had a congregational or parochial presbytery for the affairs of its own circle; these parochial presbyteries were combined into classes, which chose representatives for the provincial assembly, as did the provincial for the national. Thus, the city of London being distributed into

Taught ye by mere A. S.[f] and Rotherford[g]?
Men, whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul,
Must now be named and printed hereticks
By shallow Edwards[h] and Scotch what d'ye call[i]:
But we do hope to find out all your tricks,
Your plots and packing, worse than those of Trent[j];
That so the parliament
May, with their wholesome and preventive shears,
Clip your phylacteries, though bauk your ears[k],
And succour our just fears,
When they shall read this clearly in your charge;
New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large[l].

twelve classes, each class chose two ministers and four lay-elders to represent them in a provincial assembly, which received appeals from the parochial and classical presbyteries, &c. These ordinances, which ascertain the age of the piece before us, took place in 1646 and 1647. See Scobell, "Col." P. i. pp. 99, 150.—T. Warton.

[f] *Taught ye by mere A. S.*

The Independents were now contending for toleration. In 1643 their principal leaders published a pamphlet with this title, "An Apologeticall Narration of some Ministers formerly exiles in the Netherlands, now members of the Assembly of Divines. Humbly submitted to the honourable Houses of Parliament." This piece was answered by one A. S., the person intended by Milton.—T. Warton.

[g] *Rotherford.*

Samuel Rutherford, or Rutherfoord, was one of the chief commissioners of the church of Scotland, who sat with the Assembly at Westminster, and who concurred in settling the grand points of Presbyterian discipline. He was professor of divinity in the university of St. Andrew's, and has left a great variety of Calvinistic tracts. He was an avowed enemy to the Independents, as appears from his "Disputation on pretended Liberty of Conscience, 1649." It is hence easy to see why Rotherford was an obnoxious character to Milton.—T. Warton.

[h] *By shallow Edwards.*

It is not the "Gangrena" of Thomas Edwards that is here the object of Milton's resentment, as Dr. Newton and Mr. Thyer have supposed. Edwards had attacked Milton's favourite plan of Independency, in two pamphlets full of miserable invectives, immediately and professedly levelled against the "Apologeticall Narration" above mentioned, "Antapologia, or a full Answer to the Apologeticall Narration, &c., wherein is handled many of the Controversies of these Times. By T. Edwards, minister of the gospel. Lond. 1644." However, in the "Gangrena," not less than in these two tracts, it had been his business to blacken the opponents of Presbyterian uniformity, that the parliament might check their growth by penal statutes.—T. Warton.

[i] *And Scotch what d'ye call.*

Perhaps Henderson, or George Gillespie, another Scotch minister with a harder name, and one of the ecclesiastical commissioners at Westminster.—T. Warton.

[j] *Your plots and packing, worse than those of Trent.*

The famous council of Trent.—T. Warton.

[k] *Clip your phylacteries, though bauk your ears.*

That is, although your ears cry out that they need clipping, yet the mild and gentle parliament will content itself with only clipping away your Jewish and persecuting principles.—Warburton.

The meaning of the present context is, "Check your insolence, without proceeding to cruel punishments." To "balk," is to spare.—T. Warton.

[l] *Writ large.*

That is, more domineering and tyrannical.—Warburton.

TRANSLATIONS.

THE FIFTH ODE OF HORACE, Lib. i.

What slender youth bedew'd with liquid odours,
Courts thee on roses in some pleasant cave,
  Pyrrha? For whom bind'st thou
  In wreaths thy golden hair,
Plain in thy neatness? O, how oft shall he
On faith and changed gods complain, and seas
  Rough with black winds, and storms
  Unwonted shall admire!
Who now enjoys thee credulous, all gold,
Who always vacant, always amiable
  Hopes thee, of flattering gales
  Unmindful. Hapless they,
To whom thou untried seem'st fair! Me, in my vow'd
Picture, the sacred wall declares to have hung
  My dank and dropping weeds
  To the stern god of sea.

FROM GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH.

Brutus thus addresses Diana in the country of Leogecia:

Goddess of shades, and huntress, who at will
Walk'st on the rowling spheres, and through the deep:
On thy third reign, the earth, look now and tell
What land, what seat of rest, thou bidd'st me seek,
What certain seat, where I may worship thee
For aye, with temples vow'd and virgin quires.

To whom, sleeping before the altar, Diana answers in a vision the same night:

Brutus, far to the west, in the ocean wide,
Beyond the realm of Gaul, a land there lies,
Sea-girt it lies, where giants dwelt of old;
Now void, it fits thy people: thither bend
Thy course; there shalt thou find a lasting seat;
There to thy sons another Troy shall rise,
And kings be born of thee, whose dreadful might
Shall awe the world, and conquer nations bold.

FROM DANTE.

Ah, Constantine! of how much ill was cause,
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains
That the first wealthy pope received of thee!

FROM DANTE.

Founded in chaste and humble poverty,
'Gainst them that raised thee dost thou lift thy horn,
Impudent whore? where hast thou placed thy hope?
In thy adulterers, or thy ill-got wealth?
Another Constantine comes not in haste.

FROM ARIOSTO.

Then pass'd he to a flowery mountain green,
Which once smelt sweet, now stinks as odiously:
This was the gift, if you the truth will have,
That Constantine to good Sylvester gave.

FROM HORACE.

Whom do we count a good man? Whom but he
Who keeps the laws and statutes of the senate,
Who judges in great suits and controversies,
Whose witness and opinion wins the cause?
But his own house, and the whole neighbourhood,
Sees his foul inside through his whited skin.

FROM EURIPIDES.

This is true liberty when freeborn men,
Having to advise the publick, may speak free;
Which he who can and will deserves high praise:
Who neither can, nor will, may hold his peace:
What can be juster in a state than this?

FROM HORACE.

———Laughing, to teach the truth,
What hinders? as some teachers give to boys
Junkets and knacks that they may learn apace.

FROM HORACE.

———Joking decides great things,
Stronger and better oft than earnest can.

FROM SOPHOCLES.

'Tis you that say it, not I. You do the deeds,
And your ungodly deeds find me the words.

FROM SENECA.

———There can be slain
No sacrifice to God more acceptable,
Than an unjust and wicked king.

PSALM I.[a]

Done into verse, 1653.

Bless'd is the man who hath not walk'd astray
In counsel of the wicked, and in the way
Of sinners hath not stood, and in the seat
Of scorners hath not sat. But in the great
Jehovah's law is ever his delight,
And in his law he studies day and night.
He shall be as a tree, which planted grows
By watery streams, and in his season knows
To yield his fruit, and his leaf shall not fall;
And what he takes in hand shall prosper all.
Not so the wicked; but as chaff which fann'd
The wind drives, so the wicked shall not stand
In judgment, or abide their trial then,
Nor sinners in the assembly of just men.
For the Lord knows the upright way of the just,
And the way of bad men to ruin must.

PSALM II.

Done August 8, 1653. Terzette.

Why do the Gentiles tumult, and the nations
  Muse a vain thing, the kings of the earth upstand
  With power, and princes in their congregations
Lay deep their plots together through each land
  Against the Lord and his Messiah dear?
  Let us break off, say they, by strength of hand
Their bonds, and cast from us, no more to wear,
  Their twisted cords: He, who in heaven doth dwell,
  Shall laugh; the Lord shall scoff them; then, severe,
Speak to them in his wrath, and in his fell
  And fierce ire trouble them; but I, saith he,
  Anointed have my king (though ye rebel)
On Sion, my holy hill. A firm decree
  I will declare: the Lord to me hath said,
  Thou art my son, I have begotten thee
This day: ask of me, and the grant is made;
  As Thy possession I on thee bestow
  The heathen; and as thy conquest to be sway'd,
Earth's utmost bounds, them shalt thou bring full low

[a] Metrical psalmody was much cultivated in this age of fanaticism. Milton's father is a composer of some of the tunes in Ravenscroft's Psalms.—T. Warton.

"A literal version of the Psalms may boldly be asserted impracticable; for, if it were not, a poet so great as Milton would not, even in his earliest youth, have proved himself so very little of a formidable rival, as he has done, to Thomas Sternhold." Mason's "Essays on English Church Music," 1795, p. 177. In the last of these translations, however, as Mr. Warton observes, are some very poetical expressions.—Todd.

With iron sceptre bruised, and them disperse
Like to a potter's vessel shiver'd so.
And now be wise at length, ye kings averse;
Be taught, ye judges of the earth; with fear
Jehovah serve, and let your joy converse
With trembling: kiss the Son, lest he appear
In anger, and ye perish in the way.
If once his wrath take fire like fuel sere,
Happy all those who have in him their stay.

PSALM III. August 9, 1653.—When he fled from Absalom.

Lord, how many are my foes!
How many those,
That in arms against me rise!
Many are they,
That of my life distrustfully thus say;
No help for him in God there lies.
But thou, Lord, art my shield, my glory,
Thee, through my story,
The exalter of my head I count:
Aloud I cried
Unto Jehovah: He full soon replied,
And heard me from His holy mount.
I lay and slept; I waked again;
For my sustain[b]
Was the Lord. Of many millions
The populous rout
I fear not, though, encamping round about,
They pitch against me their pavilions.
Rise, Lord; save me, my God; for Thou
Hast smote ere now
On the cheek-bone all my foes;
Of men abhorr'd
Hast broke the teeth. This help was from the Lord;
Thy blessing on thy people flows.

PSALM IV. August 10, 1653.

Answer me when I call,
God of my righteousness;
In straits, and in distress,
Thou didst me disenthrall
And set at large; now spare,
Now pity me, and hear my earnest prayer.
Great ones, how long will ye

[b] *My sustain.*
The verb converted into a substantive.—Todd.

My glory have in scorn?
How long be thus forborn
Still to love vanity?
To love, to seek, to prize,
  Things false and vain, and nothing else but lies?
Yet know, the Lord hath chose,
Chose to himself apart,
The good and meek of heart
(For whom to choose He knows);
Jehovah from on high
  Will hear my voice, what time to him I cry.
Be awed and do not sin;
Speak to your hearts alone,
Upon your beds each one,
And be at peace within.
Offer the offerings just
  Of righteousness, and in Jehovah trust.
Many there be that say,
Who yet will show us good?
Talking like this world's brood:
But, Lord, thus let me pray;
On us lift up the light,
  Lift up the favour of thy countenance bright.
Into my heart more joy
And gladness thou hast put,
Than when a year of glut
Their stores doth overcloy,
And from their plenteous grounds
  With vast increase their corn and wine abounds.
In peace at once will I
Both lay me down and sleep;
For thou alone dost keep
Me safe where'er I lie;
As in a rocky cell,
  Thou, Lord, alone, in safety makest me dwell.

PSALM V. August 12, 1653.

Jehovah, to my words give ear,
    My meditation weigh;
  The voice of my complaining hear,
My King and God; for unto thee I pray.
  Jehovah, thou my early voice
    Shalt in the morning hear;
  In the morning I to thee with choice
Will rank my prayers, and watch till thou appear.
For thou art not a God that takes
    In wickedness delight;
  Evil with thee no biding makes;

Fools or mad men, stand not within thy sight.
All workers of iniquity
Thou hatest, and them unblest
Thou wilt destroy that speak a lie;
The bloody and guileful man God doth detest.
But I will, in thy mercies dear,
Thy numerous mercies, go
Into thy house; I, in thy fear,
Will towards thy holy temple worship low.
Lord, lead me in thy righteousness,
Lead me, because of those
That do observe if I transgress;
Set thy ways right before, where my step goes.
For, in his faltering mouth unstable,
No word is firm or sooth[c];
Their inside, troubles miserable;
An open grave their throat, their tongue they smoothe.
God, find them guilty; let them fall,
By their own counsels quell'd;
Push them in their rebellions all
Still on; for against thee they have rebell'd.
Then all who trust in thee, shall bring
Their joy; while thou from blame
Defend'st them, they shall ever sing
And shall triumph in thee, who love thy name.
For thou, Jehovah, wilt be found
To bless the just man still;
As with a shield, thou wilt surround
Him with thy lasting favour and goodwill.

PSALM VI. August 13, 1653.

Lord, in thine anger do not reprehend me,
Nor in thy hot displeasure me correct;
Pity me, Lord, for I am much deject[d],
And very weak and faint; heal and amend me:
For all my bones, that ev'n with anguish ake,
Are troubled; yea, my soul is troubled sore;
And thou, O Lord, how long? Turn, Lord; restore
My soul; O, save me for thy goodness sake:
For in death no remembrance is of thee;
Who in the grave can celebrate thy praise?
Wearied I am with sighing out my days;
Nightly my couch I make a kind of sea;
My bed I water with my tears; mine eye

[c] *Sooth* is true.—T. Warton.

[d] *Deject.*
Dejected.—Todd.

Through grief consumes, is waxen old and dark
In the midst of all mine enemies that mark.
Depart, all ye that work iniquity,
Depart from me; for the voice of my weeping
The Lord hath heard; the Lord hath heard my prayer;
My supplication with acceptance fair
The Lord will own, and have me in his keeping.
Mine enemies shall all be blank and dash'd
With much confusion; then, grown red with shame,
They shall return in haste the way they came,
And in a moment shall be quite abash'd.

PSALM VII. August 14, 1653.

Upon the words of Chush the Benjamite against him.

Lord, my God, to thee I fly;
Save me and secure me under
Thy protection, while I cry;
Lest, as a lion, and no wonder,
He haste to tear my soul asunder,
Tearing and no rescue nigh.

Lord, my God, if I have thought
Or done this; if wickedness
Be in my hands; if I have wrought
Ill to him that meant me peace;
Or to him have render'd less,
And not freed my foe for nought;

Let the enemy pursue my soul,
And overtake it; let him tread
My life down to the earth, and roll
In the dust my glory dead,
In the dust; and there, outspread,
Lodge it with dishonour foul.

Rise, Jehovah, in thine ire,
Rouse thyself, amidst the rage
Of my foes, that urge like fire;
And wake for me, their fury assuage:
Judgment here thou didst engage
And command, which I desire.

So the assemblies of each nation
Will surround thee, seeking right;
Thence to thy glorious habitation
Return on high, and in their sight.
Jehovah judgeth most upright
All people from the world's foundation.

Judge me, Lord; be judge in this
According to my righteousness,
And the innocence which is
Upon me: cause at length to cease
Of evil men the wickedness,
And their power that do amiss:

But the just establish fast,
Since thou art the just God that tries
Hearts and reins. On God is cast
My defence, and in him lies,
In him, who, both just and wise,
Saves the upright of heart at last.

God is a just judge and severe,
And God is every day offended;
If the unjust will not forbear,
His sword he whets, his bow hath bended
Already, and for him intended
The tools of death, that waits him near.

His arrows purposely made he
For them that persecute. Behold,
He travels big with vanity;
Trouble he hath conceived of old,
As in a womb; and from that mould
Hath at length brought forth a lie.

He digg'd a pit, and delved it deep,
And fell into the pit he made:
His mischief, that due course doth keep,
Turns on his head; and his ill trade
Of violence will, undelay'd,
Fall on his crown with ruin steep.

Then will I Jehovah's praise
According to his justice raise,
And sing the name and deity
Of Jehovah, the Most High.

PSALM VIII. August 14, 1653.

O Jehovah, our Lord, how wondrous great
And glorious is thy name through all the earth!
So as above the heavens thy praise to set
Out of the tender mouths of latest birth.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou
Hast founded strength because of all thy foes,
To stint the enemy, and slack the avenger's brow,
That bends his rage thy providence to oppose.

When I behold thy heavens, thy fingers' art;
The moon and stars which thou so bright hast set
In the pure firmament; then saith my heart,
O, what is man, that thou remember'st yet,

And think'st upon him; or of man begot,
That him thou visit'st, and of him art found?
Scarce to be less than gods, thou madest his lot;
With honour and with state thou hast him crown'd.

O'er the works of thy hand thou madest him lord;
Thou hast put all under his lordly feet;
All flocks and herds, by thy commanding word;
All beasts, that in the field or forest meet;

Fowl of the heavens, and fish that through the wet
Sea-paths in shoals do slide, and know no dearth.
O Jehovah, our Lord, how wonderous great
And glorious is thy name through all the earth!

APRIL, 1648. J. M.

Nine of the Psalms done into metre, wherein all, but what is in a different character, are the very words of the text, translated from the original.

PSALM LXXX.

1. THOU, Shepherd, that dost Israel *keep*,
Give ear *in time of need;*
Who leadest like a flock of sheep
Thy loved Joseph's seed;
That sitt'st between the cherubs *bright,*
Between their wings outspread;
Shine forth, *and from thy cloud give light,*
And on our foes thy dread.
2. In Ephraim's view and Benjamin's,
And in Manasses' sight,
Awake thy strength, come, and *be seen*
To save us *by thy might.*
3. Turn us again; *thy grace divine*
To us, O God, *vouchsafe;*
Cause thou thy face on us to shine,
And then we shall be safe.
4. Lord God of Hosts, how long wilt thou,
How long wilt thou declare
Thy smoking wrath *and angry brow*
Against thy people's prayer?
5. Thou feed'st them with the bread of tears;
Their bread with tears they eat;
And makest them largely drink the tears
Wherewith their cheeks are wet.

6. A strife thou makest us *and a prey*
To every neighbour foe;
Among themselves they laugh, they play,
And flouts at us they throw.
7. Return us, *and thy grace divine,*
O God of Hosts, *vouchsafe;*
Cause thou thy face on us to shine,
And then we shall be safe.
8. A vine from Egypt thou hast brought,
Thy free love made it thine;
And drovest out nations, *proud and haut,*
To plant this *lovely* vine.
9. Thou didst prepare for it a place,
And root it deep and fast;
That it *began to grow apace,*
And fill'd the land *at last.*
10. With her *green* shade that cover'd *all,*
The hills were *overspread;*
Her boughs as *high as* cedars tall
Advanced their lofty head.
11. Her branches *on the western side*
Down to the sea she sent,
And *upward* to that river *wide*
Her other branches *went.*
12. Why hast thou laid her hedges low,
And broken down her fence;
That all may pluck her, as they go,
With rudest violence?
13. The *tusked* boar out of the wood
Up turns it by the roots;
Wild beasts there brouze, and make their food
Her grapes and tender shoots.
14. Return now, God of Hosts; look down
From heaven, thy seat divine;
Behold *us, but without a frown;*
And visit this *thy* vine.
15. Visit this vine, which thy right hand
Hath set, and planted *long;*
And the young branch, that for thyself
Thou hast made firm and strong.
16. But now it is consumed with fire,
And cut *with axes* down;
They perish at thy dreadful ire,
At thy rebuke and frown.
17. Upon the man of thy right hand
Let thy *good* hand be *laid;*
Upon the son of man, whom thou
Strong for thyself hast made.

18. So shall we not go back from thee
To ways of sin and shame:
Quicken us thou; then *gladly* we
Shall call upon thy name.
19. Return us, *and thy grace divine,*
Lord God of Hosts *vouchsafe;*
Cause thou thy face on us to shine,
And then we shall be safe.

PSALM LXXXI.

1. To God our strength sing loud *and clear,*
Sing loud to God *our King;*
To Jacob's God, *that all may hear,*
Loud acclamations ring.
2. Prepare a hymn, prepare a song,
The timbrel hither bring;
The *cheerful* psaltry bring along,
And harp *with* pleasant *string.*
3. Blow, *as is wont,* in the new moon,
With trumpets' *lofty sound,*
The appointed time, the day whereon
Our solemn feast *comes round.*
4. This was a statute *given of old*
For Israel *to observe;*
A law of Jacob's God, *to hold,*
From whence they might not swerve.
5. This he a testimony ordained
In Joseph, *not to change,*
When as he pass'd through Egypt land;
The tongue I heard was strange.
6. From burden, *and from slavish toil,*
I set his shoulder free:
His hands from pots, *and miry soil,*
Deliver'd were *by me.*
7. When trouble did thee sore assail,
On me then didst thou call;
And I to free thee *did not fail,*
And led thee out of thrall.
I answer'd thee in thunder deep,
With clouds encompass'd round;
I tried thee at the water *steep*
Of Meriba *renown'd.*
8. Hear, O my people, *hearken well;*
I testify to thee,
Thou ancient stock of Israel,
If thou wilt list to me:

9. Throughout the land of thy abode
No alien god shall be;
Nor shalt thou to a foreign god
In honour bend thy knee.
10. I am the Lord thy God which brought
Thee out of Egypt land;
Ask large enough, and I, *besought*,
Will grant thy full demand.
11. And yet my people would not *hear*,
Nor hearken to my voice;
And Israel, *whom I loved so dear*,
Misliked me for his choice.
12. Then did I leave them to their will,
And to their wandering mind;
Their own conceits they follow'd still,
Their own devices blind.
13. O, that my people would *be wise*,
To serve me *all their days!*
And, O, that Israel would *advise*
To walk my *righteous* ways!
14. Then would I soon bring down their foes,
That now so proudly rise;
And turn my hand against *all those*
That are their enemies.
15. Who hate the Lord should *then be fain*
To bow to him and bend;
But *they, his people, should remain;*
Their time should have no end:
16. And he would feed them *from the shock*
With flour of finest wheat,
And satisfy them from the rock
With honey *for their meat.*

PSALM LXXXII.

1. God in the great assembly stands
Of kings and lordly states;
Among the gods, on both his hands,
He judges and debates.
2. How long will ye pervert the right
With judgment false and wrong,
Favouring the wicked *by your might,*
Who thence grow bold and strong?
3. Regard the weak and fatherless;
Despatch the poor man's cause;
And raise the man in deep distress
By just and equal laws.

4. Defend the poor and desolate,
   And rescue from the hands
Of wicked men the low estate
   Of him *that help demands.*
5. They know not, nor will understand;
   In darkness they walk on;
The earth's foundations all are moved,
   And out of order gone.
6. I said that ye were gods, yea, all
   The sons of God Most High;
7. But ye shall die like men, and fall,
   As other princes *die.*
8. Rise, God: judge thou the earth *in might,*
   This *wicked* earth redress;
For Thou art He who shall by right
   The nations all possess.

PSALM LXXXIII.

1. Be not thou silent *now at length,*
   O God; hold not thy peace;
Sit thou not still, O God of *strength,*
   We cry, and do not cease.
2. For, lo, thy *furious* foes *now* swell,
   And storm outrageously;
And they that hate thee, *proud and fell,*
   Exalt their heads full high.
3. Against thy people they contrive
   Their plots and counsels deep;
Them to ensnare they chiefly strive,
   Whom thou dost hide and keep.
4. Come, let us cut them off, say they,
   Till they no nation be;
That Israel's name for ever may
   Be lost in memory.
5. For they consult with all their might;
   And all, as one in mind,
Themselves against thee they unite,
   And in firm union bind.
6. The tents of Edom, and the brood
   Of *scornful* Ishmael,
Moab, with them of Hagar's blood,
   That in the desert dwell;
7. Gebal and Ammon *there conspire,*
   And *hateful* Amalek;
The Philistines, and they of Tyre,
   Whose bounds the sea doth check.

8. With them *great* Ashur also bands,
And doth confirm the knot:
All these have lent their armed hands
To aid the sons of Lot.
9. Do to them as to Midian *bold,*
That wasted all the coast;
To Sisera; and, as is *told,*
Thou didst to Jabin's *host,*
When, at the brook of Kishon *old,*
They were repulsed and slain,
10. At Endor quite cut off, and roll'd
As dung upon the plain.
11. As Zeb and Oreb evil sped,
So let their princes speed;
As Zeba and Zalmunna *bled,*
So let their princes *bleed.*
12. *For they amidst their pride* have said,
By right now shall we seize
God's houses, and *will now invade*
Their stately palaces.
13. My God, O make them as a wheel;
No quiet let them find;
Giddy and *restless* let *them reel,*
Like stubble from the wind.
14. As *when* an *aged* wood takes fire,
Which on a sudden strays;
The *greedy* flame runs higher and higher,
Till all the mountains blaze;
15. So with thy whirlwind them pursue,
And with thy tempest chase;
16. And, till they yield thee honour due,
Lord, fill with shame their face.
17. Ashamed and troubled let them be,
Troubled and shamed for ever;
Ever confounded, and so die
With shame, *and 'scape it never.*
18. Then shall they know, that Thou, whose name
Jehovah is alone,
Art the Most High, *and Thou the same*
O'er all the earth *art One.*

PSALM LXXXIV.

1. How lovely are thy dwellings fair!
O Lord of Hosts, how dear
The *pleasant* tabernacles are,
Where thou dost dwell so near!

2. My soul doth long, and almost die,
Thy courts, O Lord, to see;
My heart and flesh aloud do cry,
O living God, for thee.
3. There ev'n the sparrow, *freed from wrong,*
Hath found a house of *rest;*
The swallow there, to lay her young,
Hath built her *brooding* nest;
Ev'n by thy altars, Lord of Hosts,
They find their safe abode;
And home they fly from round the coasts,
Toward thee, my King, my God.
4. Happy, who in thy house reside,
Where thee they ever praise!
5. Happy, whose strength in thee doth bide,
And in their hearts thy ways!
6. They pass through Baca's *thirsty* vale,
That dry and barren ground;
As through a fruitful, watery dale,
Where springs and showers abound.
7. They journey on from strength to strength
With joy and gladsome cheer,
Till all before *our* God *at length*
In Sion do appear.
8. Lord God of Hosts, hear *now* my prayer;
O Jacob's God, give ear;
9. Thou God, our shield, look on the face
Of thy anointed *dear:*
10. For one day in thy courts *to be,*
Is better, *and more blest,*
Than *in the joys of vanity*
A thousand days *at best.*
I, in the temple of my God,
Had rather keep a door;
Than dwell in tents, *and rich abode,*
With sin *for evermore.*
11. For God the Lord, both sun and shield,
Gives grace and glory *bright;*
No good from them shall be withheld
Whose ways are just and right.
12. Lord *God* of Hosts, *that reign'st on high;*
That man is *truly* blest,
Who *only* on thee doth rely,
And in thee only rest.

PSALM LXXXV

1. Thy land to favour graciously
   Thou hast not, Lord, been slack;
Thou hast from *hard* captivity
   Returned Jacob back:
2. The iniquity thou didst forgive
   That wrought thy people woe;
And all their sin, *that did thee grieve,*
   Hast hid *where none shall know.*
3. Thine anger all thou hadst removed,
   And *calmly* didst return
From thy fierce wrath, which we had proved
   Far worse than fire to burn.
4. God of our saving health and peace,
   Turn us, and us restore;
Thine indignation cause to cease
   Toward us, *and chide no more.*
5. Wilt thou be angry without end,
   For ever angry thus?
Wilt thou thy frowning ire extend
   From age to age on us?
6. Wilt thou not turn, and *hear our voice,*
   And us again revive;
That so thy people may rejoice,
   By thee preserved alive?
7. Cause us to see thy goodness, Lord;
   To us thy mercy shew;
Thy saving health to us afford,
   And life in us renew;
8. *And now,* what God the Lord will speak,
   I will *go straight and* hear;
For to his people he speaks peace,
   And to his saints *full dear,*
To his dear saints he will speak peace;
   But let them never more
Return to folly, *but surcease*
   To trespass as before.
9. Surely, to such as do him fear,
   Salvation is at hand;
And glory shall *ere long appear*
   To dwell within our land.
10. Mercy and Truth, *that long were miss'd,*
   Now *joyfully* are met;
Sweet Peace and Righteousness have kiss'd,
   And hand in hand are set.
11. Truth from the earth, *like to a flower,*
   Shall bud and blossom *then;*

And Justice, from her heavenly bower,
  Look down *on mortal men.*
12. The Lord will also then bestow
  Whatever thing is good;
Our land shall forth in plenty throw
  Her fruits *to be our food.*
13. Before him Righteousness shall go,
  His royal harbinger:
Then will he come, and not be slow;
  His footsteps cannot err.

PSALM LXXXVI.

1. Thy *gracious* ear, O Lord, incline;
  O hear me, *I thee pray;*
For I am poor, and almost pine
  With need, *and sad decay.*
2. Preserve my soul; for I have trod
  Thy ways, and love the just:
Save thou thy servant, O my God,
  Who *still* in thee doth trust.
3. Pity me, Lord, for daily thee
  I call; 4. O, make rejoice
Thy servant's soul; for, Lord, to thee
  I lift my soul *and voice:*
5. For thou art good; thou, Lord, art prone
  To pardon; thou to all
Art full of mercy, thou *alone*
  To them that on thee call.
6. Unto my supplication, Lord,
  Give ear, and to the cry
Of my *incessant* prayers afford
  Thy hearing graciously.
7. I, in the day of my distress,
  Will call on thee *for aid;*
For thou wilt *grant* me *free access,*
  And answer *what I pray'd.*
8. Like thee among the gods is none,
  O Lord; nor any works
Of all that other gods have done,
  Like to thy *glorious* works.
9. The nations all whom thou hast made
  Shall come, *and all shall frame*
To bow them low before thee, Lord,
  And glorify thy name:
10. For great thou art, and wonders great
  By thy strong hand are done;
Thou, *in thy everlasting seat,*
  Remainest God alone.

11. Teach me, O Lord, thy way *most right;*
I in thy truth will bide;
To fear thy name my heart unite;
So shall it never slide.
12. Thee will I praise, O Lord my God,
Thee honour and adore
With my whole heart, and blaze abroad
Thy name for evermore.
13. For great thy mercy is toward me,
And thou hast freed my soul,
Ev'n from the lowest hell set free,
From deepest darkness foul.
14. O God, the proud against me rise,
And violent men are met
To seek my life, and in their eyes
No fear of thee have set.
15. But thou, Lord, art the God most mild,
Readiest thy grace to shew,
Slow to be angry, and *art styled*
Most merciful, most true.
16. O, turn to me *thy face at length,*
And me have mercy on;
Unto thy servant give thy strength,
And save thy handmaid's son.
17. Some sign of good to me afford,
And let my foes *then* see,
And be ashamed; because thou, Lord,
Dost help and comfort me.

PSALM LXXXVII.

1. Among the holy mountains *high*
Is his foundation fast;
There seated is his sanctuary;
His temple there is placed.
2. Sion's *fair* gates the Lord loves more
Than all the dwellings *fair*
Of Jacob's *land, though there be store,*
And all within his care.
3. City of God, most glorious things
Of thee *abroad* are spoke;
4. I mention Egypt, *where proud kings*
Did our forefathers yoke.
I mention Babel to my friends,
Philistia *full of scorn;*
And Tyre, with Ethiop's *utmost ends:*
Lo, this man there was born:
5. But *twice that praise shall in our ear*
Be said of Sion *last;*

This and this man was born in her;
High God shall fix her fast.
6. The Lord shall write it in a scroll
That ne'er shall be outworn,
When he the nations doth inroll;
That this man there was born.
7. Both they who sing, and they who dance,
With sacred songs are there;
In thee *fresh brooks and soft streams glance,*
And all my fountains *clear.*

PSALM LXXXVIII.

1. Lord God, that dost me save and keep,
All day to thee I cry;
And all night long before thee *weep,*
Before thee *prostrate lie.*
2. Into thy presence let my prayer,
With sighs devout ascend;
And to my cries, that *ceaseless are,*
Thine ear with favour bend.
3. For, cloy'd with woes and trouble store,
Surcharged my soul doth lie;
My life, *at Death's uncheerful door,*
Unto the grave draws nigh.
4. Reckon'd I am with them that pass
Down to the *dismal* pit:
I am a man; but weak, alas!
And for that name unfit.
5. From life discharged, and parted quite,
Among the dead to *sleep;*
And like the slain in *bloody fight,*
That in the grave lie *deep,*
Whom thou rememberest no more,
Dost never more regard;
Them, from thy hand deliver'd o'er,
Death's hideous house hath barr'd.
6. Thou in the lowest pit *profound*
Hast set me *all forlorn,*
Where thickest darkness *hovers round,*
In horrid deeps *to mourn.*
7. Thy wrath, *from which no shelter saves,*
Full sore doth press on me;
Thou break'st upon me all thy waves,
And all thy waves break me.
8. Thou dost my friends from me estrange,
And makest me odious,
Me to them odious, *for they change,*
And I here pent up thus.

9. Through sorrow and affliction great,
Mine eyes grow dim and dead:
Lord, all the day I thee entreat,
My hands to thee I spread.
10. Wilt thou do wonders on the dead?
Shall the deceased arise,
And praise thee *from their loathsome bed*
With pale and hollow eyes?
11. Shall they thy loving-kindness tell,
On whom the grave *hath hold?*
Or they, who in perdition *dwell*,
Thy faithfulness *unfold?*
12. In darkness can thy mighty *hand*
Or wondrous acts be known?
Thy justice in the *gloomy* land
Of *dark* oblivion?
13. But I to thee, O Lord, do cry,
Ere yet my life be spent;
And *up to thee* my prayer *doth hie*,
Each morn, and thee prevent.
14. Why wilt thou, Lord, my soul forsake,
And hide thy face from me,
15. That am already bruised, and shake
With terrour sent from thee?
Bruised and afflicted, and *so low*
As ready to expire;
While I thy terrours undergo,
Astonish'd with thine ire.
16. Thy fierce wrath over me doth flow;
Thy threatenings cut me through:
17. All day they round about me go;
Like waves they me pursue.
18. Lover and friend thou hast removed,
And sever'd from me far:
They *fly me now* whom I have loved,
And as in darkness are.

A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM CXIV *.

This and the following Psalm were done by the author at fifteen years old.

When the blest seed of Terah's faithful son,
After long toil, their liberty had won;
And past from Pharian fields to Canaan land,
Led by the strength of the Almighty's hand;
Jehovah's wonders were in Israel shown,
His praise and glory was in Israel known.

* This and the following Psalm are Milton's earliest performances. The first he afterwards translated into Greek.—T. Warton.

That saw the troubled sea, and shivering fled,
And sought to hide his froth-becurled head
Low in the earth; Jordan's clear streams recoil,
As a faint host that hath received the foil[f].
The high, huge-bellied mountains skip, like rams
Amongst their ewes: the little hills, like lambs.
Why fled the ocean? And why skipt the mountains?
Why turned Jordan toward his crystal fountains?
Shake, Earth; and at the presence be aghast
Of Him that ever was, and aye shall last;
That glassy floods from rugged rocks can crush,
And make soft rills from fiery flint-stones gush!

PSALM CXXXVI.

Let us, with a gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord, for he is kind:
  For his mercies aye endure,
  Ever faithful, ever sure.
Let us blaze his name abroad,
For of gods he is the God:
  For his, &c.
O, let us his praises tell,
Who doth the wrathful tyrants quell:
  For his, &c.
Who, with his miracles, doth make
Amazed heaven and earth to shake:
  For his, &c.
Who, by his wisdom, did create
The painted heavens so full of state:
  For his, &c.
Who did the solid earth ordain
To rise above the watery plain:
  For his, &c.
Who, by his all-commanding might,
Did fill the new-made world with light:
  For his, &c.
And caused the golden-tressed sun
All the day long his course to run:
  For his, &c.
The horned moon to shine by night,
Amongst her spangled sisters bright:
  For his, &c.
He, with his thunder-clasping hand,
Smote the first-born of Egypt-land:
  For his, &c.

[f] *As a faint host that hath received the foil.*
"Foil" is defeat: a substantive used in the same sense by Harrington in his "Orlando Furioso," and by Shakspeare repeatedly.—Todd.

And, in despite of Pharaoh fell,
He brought from thence his Israel:
  For his, &c.
The ruddy waves he cleft in twain
Of the Erythræan main:
  For his, &c.
The floods stood still, like walls of glass,
While the Hebrew bands did pass:
  For his, &c.
But full soon they did devour
The tawny king with all his power:
  For his, &c.
His chosen people he did bless
In the wasteful wilderness:
  For his, &c.
In bloody battle he brought down
Kings of prowess and renown:
  For his, &c.
He foil'd bold Seon and his host,
That ruled the Amorrean coast:
  For his, &c.
And large-limb'd Og he did subdue,
With all his over-hardy crew:
  For his, &c.
And, to his servant Israel,
He gave their land therein to dwell:
  For his, &c.
He hath, with a piteous eye,
Beheld us in our misery:
  For his, &c.
And freed us from the slavery
Of the invading enemy:
  For his, &c.
All living creatures he doth feed,
And with full hand supplies their need:
  For his, &c.
Let us therefore warble forth
His mighty majesty and worth:
  For his, &c.
That his mansion hath on high
Above the reach of mortal eye:
  For his mercies aye endure,
  Ever faithful, ever sure.

JOANNIS MILTONI

LONDINENSIS

POEMATA;

QUORUM PLERAQUE INTRA ANNUM ÆTATIS VIGESIMUM CONSCRIPSIT.

Hæc quæ sequuntur de Auctore testimonia, tametsi ipse intelligebat non tam de se quam supra se esse dicta, eo quod præclaro ingenio viri, necnon amici, ita fere solent laudare, ut omnia suis potius virtutibus, quam veritati congruentia, nimis cupide affingant; noluit tamen horum egregiam in se voluntatem non esse notam; cum alii præsertim ut id faceret magnopere suaderent. Dum enim nimiæ laudis invidiam totis ab se viribus amolitur, sibique quod plus æquo est non attributum esse mavult, judicium interim hominum cordatorum atque illustrium quin summo sibi honori ducat, negare non potest.

JOANNES BAPTISTA MANSUS, MARCHIO VILLENSIS, NEAPOLITANUS, AD JOANNEM MILTONIUM, ANGLUM:—

Ut mens, forma, decor, facies, mos, si pietas sic,
  Non Anglus, verum hercle Angelus, ipse fores.

AD JOANNEM MILTONEM, ANGLUM, TRIPLICI POESEOS LAUREA CORONANDUM,

Græca nimirum, Latina, atque Hetrusca, Epigramma Joannis Salsilli, Romani.

Cede, Meles; cedat depressa Mincius urna;
  Sebetus Tassum desinat usque loqui:
At Thamesis victor cunctis ferat altior undas,
  Nam per te, Milto par tribus unus erit.

AD JOANNEM MILTONUM.

Græcia Mæonidem, jactet sibi Roma Maronem;
  Anglia Miltonum jactat utrique parem.—Selvaggi.

AL SIGNOR GIO. MILTONI, NOBILE INGLESE.

ODE.

Ergimi all' Etra ò Clio
Perche di stelle intreccierò corona
Non più del Biondo Dio
La fronde eterna in Pindo, e in Elicona,
Diensi a merto maggior, maggiori i fregi,
A' celeste virtù celesti pregi.

Non puo del tempo edace
Rimaner preda, eterno alto valore
Non puo l' oblio rapace,
Furar dalle memorie eccelso onore,
Su l' arco di mia cetra un dardo forte
Virtù m' adatti, e ferirò la morte.

Del ocean profondo
Cinta dagli ampi gorghi Anglia risiede
Separata dal mondo,
Però che il suo valor l' umana eccede:
Questa feconda sa produrre Eroi,
Ch' hanno a ragion del sovruman tra noi.

Alla virtù sbandita
Danno ne i petti lor fido ricetto,
Quella gli è sol gradita,
Perche in lei san trovar gioia, e diletto;
Ridillo tu, Giovanni, e mostra in tanto
Con tua vera virtù, vero il mio Canto.

Lungi dal patrio lido
Spinse Zeusi l' industre ardente brama;
Ch' udio d' Helena il grido
Con aurea tromba rimbombar la fama,
E per poterla effigiare al paro
Dalle più belle Idee trasse il più raro.

Cosi l' ape ingegnosa
Trae con industria il suo liquor pregiato
Dal giglio e dalla rosa,
E quanti vaghi fiori ornano il prato;
Formano un dolce suon diverse chorde,
Fan varie voci melodia concorde.

Di bella gloria amante
Milton dal ciel natio per varie parti
Le peregrine piante
Volgesti a ricercar scienze, ed arti;
Del Gallo regnator vedesti i regni,
E dell' Italia ancor gl' Eroi più degni.

Fabro quasi divino
Sol virtù rintracciando il tuo pensiero
Vide in ogni confino
Chi di nobil valor calca il sentiero;
L 'ottimo dal miglior dopo scegleia
Per fabbricar d' ogni virtù l' idea.

Quanti nacquero in Flora
O in lei del parlar Tosco appreser l' arte,
La cui memoria onora
Il mondo fatta eterna in dotte carte,
Volesti ricercar per tuo tesoro,
E parlasti con lor nell' opre loro.

Nell' altera Babelle
Per te il parlar confuse Giove in vano,
Che per varie favelle
Di se stessa trofeo cadde su 'l piano:
Ch' Ode oltr' all' Anglia il suo più degno idioma
Spagna, Francia, Toscana, e Grecia, e Roma.

I più profondi arcani
Ch' occulta la natura e in cielo e in terra
Ch' à ingegni sovrumani
Troppo avaro tal' hor gli chiude, e serra,
Chiaromente conosci, e giungi al fine
Della moral virtude al gran confine.

Non batta il Tempo l' ale,
Fermisi immoto, e in un fermin si gl' anni,
Che di virtù immortale
Scorron di troppo ingiuriosi a i danni;
Che s' opre degne di poema o storia
Furon gia, l' hai presenti alla memoria.

Dammi tua dolce cetra
Se vuoi ch' io dica del tuo dolce canto,
Ch' inalzandoti all' Etra
Di farti huomo celeste ottiene il vanto,
Il Tamigi il dirà che gl' e concesso
Per te suo cigno pareggiar Permesso.

Io che in riva del Arno
Tento spiegar tuo merto alto e preclaro,
So che fatico indarno,
E ad ammirar, non a lodarlo imparo;
Freno dunque la lingua, e ascolto il core
Che ti prende a lodar con lo stupore.

Del Sig. Antonio Francini,
Gentilhuomo Fiorentino.

JOANNI MILTONI LONDINENSI:—

Juveni patria virtutibus eximio;

Viro, qui multa peregrinatione, studio cuncta orbis terrarum loca perspexit; ut novus Ulysses omnia ubique ab omnibus apprehenderet:

Polyglottô, in cujus ore linguæ jam deperditæ sic reviviscunt, ut idiomata omnia sint in ejus laudibus infacunda; et jure ea percallet, ut admirationes et plausus populorum ab propria sapientia excitatos intelligat:

Illi, cujus animi dotes corporisque sensus ad admirationem commovent, et per ipsam motum cuique auferunt; cujus opera ad plausus hortantur, sed venustate* vocem laudatoribus adimunt:

Cui in memoria totus orbis; in intellectu sapientia; in voluntate ardor gloriæ; in ore eloquentia; harmonicos cœlestium sphærarum sonitus, astronomia duce, audienti; characteres mirabilium naturæ, per quos Dei magnitudo describitur, magistra philosophia, legenti; antiquitatum latebras, vetustatis excidia, eruditionis ambages, comite assidua auctorum lectione,

Exquirenti, restauranti, percurrenti:
At cur nitor in arduum?

Illi, in cujus virtutibus evulgandis ora Famæ non sufficiant, nec hominum stupor in laudandis satis est; reverentiæ et amoris ergo hoc ejus meritis debitum admirationis tributum offert Carolus Datus†, Patricius Florentinus,

Tanto homini servus, tantæ virtutis amator.

* In the edition 1645, it stood "vastitate."
† Carlo Dati, one of Milton's literary friends at Florence. See 'Epitaph. Damon.' v. 137.—T. Warton.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE LATIN VERSES.

Milton is said to be the first Englishman, who, after the restoration of letters, wrote Latin verses with classic elegance: but we must at least except some of the hendecasyllables and epigrams of Leland, one of our first literary reformers, from this hasty determination.

In the Elegies, Ovid was professedly Milton's model for language and versification: they are not, however, a perpetual and uniform tissue of Ovidian phraseology. With Ovid in view, he has an original manner and character of his own, which exhibit a remarkable perspicuity of contexture, a native facility and fluency. Nor does his observation of Roman models oppress or destroy our great poet's inherent powers of invention and sentiment: I value these pieces as much for their fancy and genius, as for their style and expression.

That Ovid among the Latin poets was Milton's favourite, appears not only from his elegiac, but his hexametric poetry. The versification of our author's hexameters has yet a different structure from that of the "Metamorphoses:" Milton's is more clear, intelligible, and flowing; less desultory, less familiar, and less embarrassed with a frequent recurrence of periods. Ovid is at once rapid and abrupt; he wants dignity: he has too much conversation in his manner of telling a story. Prolixity of paragraph, and length of sentence, are peculiar to Milton: this is seen, not only in some of his exordial invocations in the 'Paradise Lost,' and in many of the religious addresses of a like cast in the Prose Works, but in his long verse. It is to be wished that, in his Latin compositions of all sorts, he had been more attentive to the simplicity of Lucretius, Virgil, and Tibullus.

Dr. Johnson, unjustly I think, prefers the Latin poetry of May and Cowley to that of Milton, and thinks May to be the first of the three. May is certainly a sonorous versifier, and was sufficiently accomplished in poetical declamation for the continuation of Lucan's "Pharsalia:" but May is scarcely an author in point: his skill is in parody; and he was confined to the peculiarities of an archetype, which, it may be presumed, he thought excellent. As to Cowley when compared with Milton, the same critic observes, "Milton is generally content to express the thoughts of the ancients in their language: Cowley, without much loss of purity or elegance, accommodates the diction of Rome to his own conceptions. The advantage seems to lie on the side of Cowley." But what are these conceptions? Metaphysical conceits; all the unnatural extravagances of his English poetry; such as will not bear to be clothed in the Latin language, much less are capable of admitting any degree of pure Latinity.

Milton's Latin poems may be justly considered as legitimate classical compositions, and are never disgraced with such language and such imagery: Cowley's Latinity, dictated by an irregular and unrestrained imagination, presents a mode of diction half Latin and half English. It is not so much that Cowley wanted a knowledge of the Latin style, but that he suffered that knowledge to be perverted and corrupted by false and extravagant thoughts. Milton was a more perfect scholar than Cowley, and his mind was more deeply tinctured with the excellences of ancient literature: he was a more just thinker, and therefore a more just writer: in a word he had more taste, and more poetry, and consequently more propriety. If a fondness for the Italian writers has sometimes infected his English poetry with false ornaments; his Latin verses, both in diction and sentiment, are at least free from those depravations.

Some of Milton's Latin poems were written in his first year at Cambridge, when he was only seventeen: they must be allowed to be very correct and manly performances for a youth of that age; and, considered in that view, they discover an extraordinary copiousness and command of ancient fable and history. I cannot but add, that Gray resembles Milton in many instances: among others, in their youth they were both strongly attached to the cultivation of Latin poetry.—T. Warton.

ELEGIARUM LIBER.

ELEG. I.

AD CAROLUM DEODATUM [a].

TANDEM, care, tuæ mihi pervenere tabellæ,
  Pertulit, et voces nuncia charta tuas:
Pertulit, occidua Devæ Cestrensis ab ora
  Vergivium [b] prono qua petit amne salum.
Multum, crede, juvat terras aluisse remotas
  Pectus amans nostri, tamque fidele caput,
Quodque mihi lepidum tellus longinqua sodalem
  Debet, at unde brevi reddere jussa velit.
Me tenet urbs reflua quam Thamesis alluit unda [c],
  Meque nec invitum patria dulcis habet.
Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura revisere Camum,
  Nec dudum vetiti me laris angit amor.
Nuda nec arva placent, umbrasque negantia molles:
  Quam male Phœbicolis convenit ille locus!
Nec duri libet usque minas perferre magistri,
  Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo.
Si sit hoc exilium patrios adiisse penates,
  Et vacuum curis otia grata sequi,
Non ego vel profugi nomen sortemve recuso,
  Lætus et exilii conditione fruor.

[a] Charles Deodate was one of Milton's most intimate friends; he was an excellent scholar, and practised physic in Cheshire. He was educated with our author at St. Paul's school, and from thence was sent to Trinity College, Oxford, where he was entered February 7, 1621, at thirteen years of age. He was a fellow-collegian there with Alexander Gill, another of Milton's intimate friends, who was successively usher and master of St. Paul's school. Deodate has a copy of Alcaics extant in an Oxford collection on the death of Camden, called "Camdeni Insignia." He left the college when he was a gentleman commoner, in 1628, having taken the degree of master of arts. Toland says that he had in his possession two Greek letters, very well written, from Deodate to Milton. Two of Milton's familiar Latin letters, in the utmost freedom of friendship, are to Deodate: both dated from London, 1637. But the best, certainly the most pleasing evidences of their intimacy, and of Deodate's admirable character, are our author's first and sixth Elegies, the fourth Sonnet, and the 'Epitaphium Damonis:' and it is highly probable, that Deodate is the "simple shepherd lad," in 'Comus,' who is skilled in plants, and loved to hear Thyrsis sing, v. 619, seq. He died in the year 1638. This Elegy was written about the year 1627, in answer to a letter out of Cheshire from Deodate.—T. WARTON.

[b] *Vergivium.*

The Irish Sea.—T. WARTON.

[c] *Me tenet urbs reflua quam Thamesis alluit unda.*

To have pointed out London, by only calling it the city washed by the Thames, would have been a general and a trite allusion: but this allusion being combined with the peculiar circumstance of the reflux of the tide, becomes new, poetical, and appropriate. The adjective *reflua* is at once descriptive and distinctive. Ovid has "refluum mare," Metam. vii. 267.—T. WARTON.

O, utinam vates nunquam graviora tulisset
  Ille Tomitano flebilis exul agro;
Non tunc Ionio quicquam cessisset Homero,
  Neve foret victo laus tibi prima, Maro.
Tempora nam licet hic placidis dare libera Musis,
  Et totum rapiunt me, mea vita, libri:
Excipit hinc fessum sinuosi pompa theatri [d],
  Et vocat ad plausus garrula scena suos.
Seu catus auditur senior, seu prodigus hæres,
  Seu procus, aut posita casside miles adest,
Sive decennali fœcundus lite patronus
  Detonat inculto barbara verba foro [e];
Sæpe vafer gnato succurrit servus amanti,
  Et nasum rigidi fallit ubique patris;
Sæpe novos illic virgo mirata calores,
  Quid sit amor nescit; dum quoque nescit, amat.
Sive cruentatum furiosa Tragœdia sceptrum
  Quassat, et effusis crinibus ora rotat,
Et dolet, et specto, juvat et spectasse dolendo;
  Interdum et lacrymis dulcis amaror inest:
Seu puer infelix indelibata reliquit
  Gaudia, et abrupto flendus amore cadit;
Seu ferus e tenebris iterat Styga criminis ultor,
  Conscia funereo pectora torre movens [f]:
Seu mœret Pelopeia domus, seu nobilis Ili,
  Aut luit incestos aula Creontis avos.
Sed neque sub tecto semper, nec in urbe, latemus;
  Irrita nec nobis tempora veris eunt.
Nos quoque lucus habet vicina consitus ulmo,
  Atque suburbani nobilis umbra loci [g].
Sæpius hic, blandas spirantia sidera flammas,
  Virgineos videas præteriisse choros.
Ah, quoties dignæ stupui miracula formæ,
  Quæ possit senium vel reparare Jovis!
Ah, quoties vidi superantia lumina gemmas,
  Atque faces, quotquot volvit uterque polus!

[d] *Excipit hinc fessum sinuosi pompa theatri, &c.*

The theatre, as Mr. Warton observes, seems to have been a favourite amusement of Milton's youth. See 'L'Allegro,' v. 131.—TODD.

[e] *Sive decennali fœcundus lite patronus*
Detonat inculto barbara verba foro.

He probably means the play of "Ignoramus."—T. WARTON.

[f] By the youth in the first couplet, he perhaps intends Shakspeare's "Romeo;" in the second, either "Hamlet," or "Richard III." He then draws his illustrations from the ancient tragedians. The allusions, however, to Shakspeare's incidents do not exactly correspond. In the first instance, Romeo was not torn from joys "untasted:" although "puer" and "abrupto amore" are much in point. The allusions are loose, or resulting from memory, or not intended to tally minutely.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Atque suburbani nobilis umbra loci.*

Some country-house of Milton's father very near London is here intended, of which we have now no notices.—T. WARTON.

Collaque bis vivi Pelopis quæ brachia vincant,
  Quæque fluit puro nectare tincta via!
Et decus eximium frontis, tremulosque capillos,
  Aurea quæ fallax retia tendit Amor!
Pellacesque genas, ad quas hyacinthina sordet
  Purpura, et ipse tui floris, Adoni, rubor!
Cedite, laudatæ toties Heroides olim,
  Et quæcunque vagum cepit amica Jovem.
Cedite, Achæmeniæ turrita fronte puellæ,
  Et quot Susa colunt, Memnoniamque Ninon [h];
Vos etiam, Danaæ fasces submittite nymphæ,
  Et vos, Iliacæ, Romuleæque nurus:
Nec Pompeianas Tarpëia Musa [i] columnas
  Jactet, et Ausoniis plena theatra stolis.
Gloria virginibus debetur prima Britannis;
  Extera, sat tibi sit, fœmina, posse sequi.
Tuque urbs Dardaniis, Londinum, structa colonis,
  Turrigerum late conspicienda caput,
Tu nimium felix intra tua mœnia claudis
  Quicquid formosi pendulus orbis habet.
Non tibi tot cœlo scintillant astra sereno,
  Endymioneæ turba ministra deæ,
Quot tibi, conspicuæ formaque auroque, puellæ
  Per medias radiant turba videnda vias.
Creditur huc geminis venisse invecta columbis
  Alma pharetrigero milite cincta Venus;
Huic Cnidon, et riguas Simoentis flumine valles,
  Huic Paphon, et roseam posthabitura Cypron.
Ast ego, dum pueri sinit indulgentia cæci,
  Mœnia quam subito linquere fausta paro;
Et vitare procul malefidæ infamia Circes
  Atria, divini Molyos usus ope.
Stat quoque juncosas Cami remeare paludes,
  Atque iterum raucæ murmur adire scholæ.
Interea fidi parvum cape munus amici,
  Paucaque in alternos verba coacta modos.

[h] *Et quot Susa colunt, Memnoniamque Ninon.*

Susa, anciently a capital city of Susiana in Persia, conquered by Cyrus. Xerxes marched from this city, to enslave Greece. It is now called Souster. Ninos was a city of Assyria, built by Ninus: Memnon, a hero of the Iliad, had a palace there, and was the builder of Susa. Milton is alluding to oriental beauty. In the next couplet, he challenges the ladies of ancient Greece, Troy, and Rome.—T. WARTON.

[i] *Nec Pompeianas Tarpëia Musa.*

The poet has a retrospect to a long passage in Ovid, who is here called "Tarpëia Musa," either because he had a house adjoining to the Capitol, or by way of distinction, that he was the Tarpeian, the general Roman Muse.—T. WARTON.

The learned Lord Monboddo pronounces this Elegy to be equal to anything of the "elegiac kind, to be found in Ovid, or even in Tibullus."—T. WARTON.

ELEG. II.

In Obitum Præconis Academici Cantabrigiensis[j].

ANNO ÆTATIS 17.

TE, qui, conspicuus baculo fulgente, solebas
  Palladium toties ore ciere gregem[k];
Ultima præconum, præconem te quoque sæva
  Mors rapit, officio nec favet ipsa suo.
Candidiora licet fuerint tibi tempora plumis,
  Sub quibus accipimus delituisse Jovem;
O dignus tamen Hæmonio juvenescere succo,
  Dignus in Æsonios vivere posse dies;
Dignus, quem Stygiis medica revocaret ab undis
  Arte Coronides, sæpe rogante dea.
Tu si jussus eras acies accire togatas,
  Et celer a Phœbo nuntius ire tuo;
Talis[l] in Iliaca stabat Cyllenius aula
  Alipes, æthereа missus ab arce Patris:
Talis et Eurybates ante ora furentis Achillei
  Rettulit Atridæ jussa severa ducis.
Magna sepulcrorum regina[m], satelles Averni,
  Sæva nimis Musis, Palladi sæva nimis,
Quin illos rapias qui pondus inutile terræ[n];
  Turba quidem est telis ista petenda tuis:
Vestibus hunc igitur pullis, Academia, luge,
  Et madeant lacrymis nigra feretra tuis[o].
Fundat et ipsa modos querebunda Elegëia tristes,
  Personet et totis nænia mœsta scholis.

[j] The person here commemorated is Richard Ridding, one of the university-beadles, and a master of arts of St. John's College, Cambridge. He signed a testamentary codicil, September 23, 1626, proved the eighth of November following.—T. WARTON.

[k] It was a custom at Cambridge, lately disused, for one of the beadles to make proclamation of convocations in every college. This is still in use at Oxford.—T. WARTON.

[l] *Talis, &c.*

These allusions are proofs of our author's early familiarity with Homer.—T. WARTON.

[m] *Magna sepulcrorum regina.*

A sublime poetical appellation for Death; and much in the manner of his English poetry.—T. WARTON.

[n] *Pondus inutile terræ.*

Homer, Il. xviii. 104.—JOS. WARTON.

[o] *Et madeant lacrymis nigra feretra tuis.*

Here seems to be an allusion to the custom of affixing verses on the pall, formerly perhaps more generally observed at Cambridge. "Lacrymis tuis" are the funeral poems, as "tear" is in 'Lycidas,' v. 14.—TODD.

This Elegy, with the next on the death of Bishop Andrewes, the Odes on the death of Professor Goslyn and Bishop Felton, and the poem on the fifth of November, are very correct and manly performances for a boy of seventeen. This was our author's first year at Cambridge. They discover a great fund and command of ancient literature.—T. WARTON.

ELEG. III.

In Obitum Præsulis Wintoniensis [p].—Anno Ætatis 17.

Mœstus eram, et tacitus, nullo comitante, sedebam;
  Hærebantque animo tristia plura meo:
Protinus, en! subiit funestæ cladis imago,
  Fecit in Angliaco quam Libitina solo [q];
Dum procerum ingressa est splendentes marmore turres
  Dira sepulcrali Mors metuenda face;
Pulsavitque auro gravidos et jaspide muros,
  Nec metuit satrapum sternere falce greges.
Tunc memini clarique ducis [r], fratrisque verendi
  Intempestivis ossa cremata rogis:
Et memini heroum, quos vidit ad æthera raptos,
  Flevit et amissos Belgia tota duces.
At te præcipue luxi, dignissime Præsul,
  Wintoniæque olim gloria magna tuæ;
Delicui fletu, et tristi sic ore querebar:—
  "Mors fera, Tartareo diva secunda Jovi,
Nonne satis quod sylva tuas persentiat iras,
  Et quod in herbosos jus tibi detur agros?
Quodque afflata tuo marcescant lilia tabo,
  Et crocus, et pulchræ Cypridi sacra rosa?
Nec sinis, ut semper fluvio contermina quercus
  Miretur lapsus prætereuntis aquæ?
Et tibi succumbit, liquido quæ plurima cœlo
  Evehitur pennis, quamlibet augur, avis;
Et quæ mille nigris errant animalia sylvis;
  Et quot alunt mutum Proteos antra pecus.
Invida, tanta tibi cum sit concessa potestas,
  Quid juvat humana tingere cæde manus;
Nobileque in pectus certas acuisse sagittas,
  Semideamque animam sede fugasse sua?"
Talia dum lacrymans alto sub pectore volvo,
  Roscidus occiduis Hesperus exit aquis,
Et Tartessiaco [s] submerserat æquore currum
  Phœbus, ab Eoo littore mensus iter:

[p] Lancelot Andrewes, bishop of Winchester, had been originally master of Pembroke-hall in Cambridge; but long before Milton's time. He died at Winchester-house in Southwark, Sept. 21, 1626.—T. Warton.

[q] *Fecit in Angliaco quam Libitina solo.*

A very severe plague now raged in London and the neighbourhood, of which 35,417 persons are said to have died.—T. Warton.

[r] *Tunc memini clarique ducis, &c.*

I am kindly informed by Sir David Dalrymple,—"The two generals here mentioned, who died in 1626, were the two champions of the Queen of Bohemia—the Duke of Brunswick, and Count Mansfelt: 'Frater' means a sworn brother in arms, according to the military cant of those days. The next couplet respects the death of Henry, Earl of Oxford, who died not long before." Henry, Earl of Oxford, Shakspeare's patron, died at the siege of Breda in 1625.—T. Warton.

[s] *Et Tartessiaco, &c.*

Ovid, Metam. xiv. 416:—"Presserat occiduus Tartessia littora Phœbus." "Tar-

Nec mora, membra cavo posui refovenda cubili,
  Condiderant oculos noxque soporque meos:
Cum mihi visus eram lato spatiarier agro;
  Heu! nequit ingenium visa referre meum.
Illic punicea radiabant omnia luce,
  Ut matutino cum juga sole rubent.
Ac veluti cum pandit opes Thaumantia proles,
  Vestitu nituit multicolore solum.
Non dea tam variis ornavit floribus hortos
  Alcinoi, Zephyro Chloris amata levi [t].
Flumina vernantes lambunt argentea campos,
  Ditior Hesperio flavet arena Tago.
Serpit odoriferas per opes levis aura Favoni,
  Aura sub innumeris humida nata rosis.
Talis in extremis terræ Gangetidis oris
  Luciferi regis fingitur esse domus.
Ipse racemiferis dum densas vitibus umbras,
  Et pellucentes miror ubique locos,
Ecce! mihi subito Præsul Wintonius astat;
  Sidereum nitido fulsit in ore jubar;
Vestis ad auratos defluxit candida talos;
  Infula divinum cinxerat alba caput:
Dumque senex tali incedit venerandus amictu,
  Intremuit læto florea terra sono.
Agmina gemmatis plaudunt cœlestia pennis,
  Pura triumphali personat æthra tuba.
Quisque novum amplexu comitem cantuque salutat,
  Hosque aliquis placido misit ab ore sonos:—
"Nate, veni, et patrii felix cape gaudia regni;
  Semper abhinc duro, nate, labore vaca [u]."
Dixit, et aligeræ tetigerunt nablia turmæ;
  At mihi cum tenebris aurea pulsa quies.
Flebam turbatos Cephaleia pellice somnos:
  Talia contingant somnia sæpe mihi!

tessiacus" occurs in Martial, Epigr. ix. 46. We are to understand the straits of Hercules, or the Atlantic Ocean.—T. WARTON.

[t] *Non dea tam variis ornavit floribus hortos*
Alcinoi, Zephyro Chloris amata levi.

Eden is compared to the Homeric garden of Alcinous, 'Paradise Lost,' b. v. 341; b. ix. 439. Chloris is Flora, who, according to ancient fable, was beloved by Zephyr. Hence our author is to be explained, 'Paradise Lost,' b. v. 16:—

Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes.—T. WARTON.

[u] *Semper abhinc duro, nate, labore vaca.*

Rev. xiv. 13:—"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours."—JOS. WARTON.

Milton, as he grew old in puritanism, must have looked back with disgust and remorse on the panegyric of this performance, as on one of the sins of his youth, inexperience, and orthodoxy; for he had here celebrated, not only a bishop, but a bishop who supported the dignity and constitution of the Church of England in their most extensive latitude; the distinguished favourite of Elizabeth and James, and the defender of regal prerogative.—T. WARTON.

ELEG. IV.

Ad THOMAM JUNIUM, preceptorem suum, apud mercatores Anglicós, Hamburgæ agentes, pastoris munere fungentem [v].

ANNO ÆTATIS 18.

CURRE per immensum subito, mea litera, pontum;
I, pete Teutonicos læve per æquor agros;
Segnes rumpe moras, et nil, precor, obstet eunti,
Et festinantis nil remoretur iter.
Ipse ego Sicanio frænantem carcere ventos
Æolon, et virides sollicitabo deos,
Cæruleamque suis comitatam Dorida nymphis,
Ut tibi dent placidam per sua regna viam.
At tu, si poteris, celeres tibi sume jugales,
Vecta quibus Colchis fugit ab ore viri [w];
Aut queis Triptolemus [x] Scythicas devenit in oras,
Gratus Eleusina missus ab urbe puer.
Atque ubi Germanas flavere videbis arenas,
Ditis ad Hamburgæ mœnia flecte gradum,
Dicitur occiso quæ ducere nomen ab Hama [y],
Cimbrica quem fertur clava dedisse neci.
Vivit ibi antiquæ clarus pietatis honore
Præsul, Cristicolas pascere doctus oves:
Ille quidem est animæ plusquam pars altera nostræ;
Dimidio vitæ vivere cogor ego.
Hei mihi! quot pelagi, quot montes interjecti,
Me faciunt alia parte carere mei!
Carior ille mihi, quam tu, doctissime Graium,
Cliniadi, pronepos qui Telamonis erat [z];

[v] Thomas Young, now pastor of the church of English merchants at Hamburg, was Milton's private preceptor, before he was sent to St. Paul's school. Aubrey, in his manuscript life, calls him "a puritan in Essex, who cutt his haire short." Under such an instructor, Milton probably first imbibed the principles of puritanism: but whatever were Young's religious instructions, our author professes to have received from this learned master his first introduction to the study of poetry, v. 29.

This Thomas Young, who appears to have returned to England in or before the year 1628, was Dr. Thomas Young, a member of the Assembly of Divines, where he was a constant attendant, and one of the authors of the book called "Smectymnuus," defended by Milton; and who, from a London preachership in Duke's-place, was preferred by the parliament to the mastership of Jesus College in Cambridge: Neal's "Hist. Pur." iii. 122, 59. Clarke, a Calvinistic biographer, attests that he was "a man of great learning, of much prudence and piety, and of great ability and fidelity in the work of the ministry."—"Lives," p. 194.—T. WARTON.

[w] "Take the swift car of Medea, in which she fled from her husband."—T. WARTON.

[x] *Aut queis Triptolemus, &c.*

Triptolemus was carried from Eleusis in Greece, into Scythia, and the most uncultivated regions of the globe, on winged serpents, to teach mankind the use of wheat.—T. WARTON.

[y] *Dicitur occiso quæ ducere nomen ab Hama.*

Krantzius, a Gothic geographer, says, that the city of Hamburg in Saxony took its name from Hama, a puissant Saxon champion, who was killed on the spot where that city stands by Starchater, a Danish giant. The "Cimbrica clava" is the club of the Dane. In describing Hamburg, this romantic tale could not escape Milton.—T. WARTON.

[z] Dearer than Socrates to Alcibiades, who was the son of Clinias, and has this ap-

Quamque Stagyrites[a] generoso magnus alumno,
  Quem peperit Libyco Chaonis alma Jovi.
Qualis Amyntorides, qualis Philyrëius heros[b]
  Myrmidonum regi, talis et ille mihi.
Primus ego Aonios, illo præeunte, recessus
  Lustrabam, et bifidi sacra vireta jugi;
Pieriosque hausi latices, Clioque favente,
  Castalio sparsi læta ter ora mero.
Flammeus at signum ter viderat arietis Æthon[c],
  Induxitque auro lanea terga novo;
Bisque novo terram sparsisti, Chlori, senilem
  Gramine, bisque tuas abstulit Auster opes:
Necdum ejus licuit mihi lumina pascere vultu,
  Aut linguæ dulcis aure bibisse sonos.
Vade igitur, cursuque Eurum præverte sonorum;
  Quam sit opus monitis, res docet, ipsa vides.
Invenies dulci cum conjuge forte sedentem,
  Mulcentem gremio pignora cara suo:
Forsitan aut veterum prælarga volumina patrum
  Versantem, aut veri Biblia sacra Dei;
Cœlestive animas saturantem rore tenellas,
  Grande salutiferæ religionis opus.
Utque solet, multam sit dicere cura salutem,
  Dicere quam decuit, si modo adesset, herum.
Hæc quoque, paulum oculos in humum defixa modestos,
  Verba verecundo sis memor ore loqui:—
Hæc tibi, si teneris vacat inter prælia Musis,
  Mittit ab Angliaco littore fida manus.
Accipe sinceram, quamvis sit sera, salutem;
  Fiat et hoc ipso gratior illa tibi.
Sera quidem, sed vera fuit, quam casta recepit
  Icaris a lento Penelopeia viro.
Ast ego quid volui manifestum tollere crimen,
  Ipse quod ex omni parte levare nequit?
Arguitur tardus merito, noxamque fatetur,
  Et pudet officium deseruisse suum.
Tu modo da veniam fasso, veniamque roganti;
  Crimina diminui, quæ patuere, solent.
Non ferus in pavidos rictus diducit hiantes,
  Vulnifico pronos nec rapit ungue leo.

pellation in Ovid's Ibis, "Cliniadæque modo," &c. v. 635. Alcibiades, the son of Clinias, was anciently descended from Eurysaces, a son of the Telamonian Ajax.—T. Warton.

[a] Aristotle, preceptor to Alexander the Great.—T. Warton.

[b] *Qualis Amyntorides, qualis Philyrëius heros.*

Phœnix, the son of Amyntor, and Chiron, both instructors of Achilles. The instances are, of the love of scholars to their masters, in ancient history.—T. Warton.

[c] Two years and one month; in which had passed three vernal equinoxes, two springs and two winters. Young, we may then suppose, went abroad in February, 1628, when Milton was about fifteen. But compare their prose correspondence, where Milton says, "quod autem plusquam triennio nunquam ad te scripserim."—T. Warton.

Sæpe sarissiferi[d] crudelia pectora Thracis
  Supplicis ad mœstas delicuere preces:
Extensæque manus avertunt fulminis ictus,
  Placat et iratos hostia parva Deos.
Jamque diu scripsisse tibi fuit impetus illi,
  Neve moras ultra ducere passus Amor;
Nam vaga Fama refert (heu, nuntia vera malorum!)
  In tibi finitimis bella tumere locis;
Teque tuamque urbem truculento milite cingi,
  Et jam Saxonicos arma parasse duces[e].
Te circum late campos populatur Enyo,
  Et sata carne virum jam cruor arva rigat;
Germanisque suum concessit Thracia Martem;
  Illuc Odrysios Mars pater egit equos;
Perpetuoque comans jam deflorescit oliva,
  Fugit et ærisonam diva perosa tubam,
Fugit, io! terris, et jam non ultima virgo
  Creditur ad superas justa volasse domos.
Te tamen interea belli circumsonat horror,
  Vivis et ignoto solus inopsque solo[f];
Et, tibi quam patrii non exhibuere penates,
  Sede peregrina quæris egenus opem[g].
Patria, dura parens, et saxis sævior albis,
  Spumea quæ pulsat littoris unda tui;
Siccine te decet innocuos exponere fœtus,
  Siccine in externam ferrea cogis humum?
Et sinis, ut terris quærant alimenta remotis
  Quos tibi prospiciens miserat ipse Deus,
Et qui læta ferunt de cœlo nuntia, quique,
  Quæ via post cineres ducat ad astra, docent?
Digna quidem, Stygiis quæ vivas clausa tenebris,
  Æternaque animæ digna perire fame!

[d] *Sæpe sarissiferi.*

From the Macedonian "sarissa," or "pike;" whence soldiers were called "sarissophori." See Liv. ix. 19. And Ovid, Met. xii. 466.—TODD.

[e] *Et jam Saxonicos arma parasse duces.*

About the year 1626, when this Elegy was written, the imperialists, under General Tilly, were often encountered by Christian, Duke of Brunswick, and the Dukes of Saxony, particularly Duke William of Saxe Weimar, and the Duke of Saxe Lauenberg, in Lower Saxony, of which Hamburg, where Young resided, is the capital. See v. 77. Germany in general, either by invasion or interior commotions, was a scene of the most bloody war, from the year 1618 till later than 1640. Gustavus Adolphus conquered the greater part of Germany about 1631.—T. WARTON.

[f] *Vivis et ignoto solus inopsque solo.*

These circumstances, added to others, leave us strongly to suspect that Young was a nonconformist, and probably compelled to quit England on account of his religious opinions and practice. He seems to have been driven back to England, by the war in the Netherlands, not long after this Elegy was written.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Sede peregrina quæris egenus opem.*

Before and after 1630, many English ministers, puritanically affected, left their cures, and settled in Holland, where they became pastors of separate congregations; when matters took another turn in England, they returned, and were rewarded for their unconforming obstinacy in the new Presbyterian establishment.—T. WARTON.

Haud aliter vates terræ Thesbitidis olim
Pressit inassueto devia tesqua pede,
Desertasque Arabum salebras, dum regis Achabi
Effugit, atque tuas, Sidoni dira [h], manus:
Talis et, horrisono laceratus membra flagello [i],
Paulus ab Æmathia pellitur urbe Cilix.
Piscosæque ipsum Gergessæ civis Iësum
Finibus ingratus jussit abire suis.
At tu sume animos; nec spes cadat anxia curis,
Nec tua concutiat decolor ossa metus.
Sis etenim quamvis fulgentibus obsitus armis,
Intententque tibi millia tela necem;
At nullis vel inerme latus violabitur armis,
Deque tuo cuspis nulla cruore bibet.
Namque eris ipse Dei radiante sub ægide tutus;
Ille tibi bustos, et pugil ille tibi:
Ille, Sionææ qui tot sub mœnibus arcis
Assyrios fudit nocte silente viros;
Inque fugam vertit quos in Samaritadas oras
Misit ab antiquis prisca Damascus agris;
Terruit et densas pavido cum rege cohortes,
Aere dum vacuo buccina clara sonat,
Cornea pulvereum dum verberat ungula campum,
Currus arenosam dum quatit actus humum,
Auditurque hinnitus equorum ad bella ruentum,
Et strepitus ferri, murmuraque alta virum.
Et tu [j] (quod superest miseris) sperare memento,
Et tua magnanimo pectore vince mala;
Nec dubites quandoque frui melioribus annis [k],
Atque iterum patrios posse videre lares.

ELEG. V.
In Adventum Veris.
ANNO ÆTATIS 20 [l].

In se perpetuo Tempus revolubile gyro
Jam revocat Zephyros vere tepente novos;

[h] *Sidoni dira.*

Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. "Sidoni" is a vocative, from Sidonis, often applied by Ovid to Europa, the daughter of Agenor, king of Syria.—T. WARTON.

[i] *Talis et, horrisono laceratus membra flagello, &c.*

Whipping and imprisonment were among the punishments of the arbitrary Star-chamber, the threats "regis Achabi," which Young fled to avoid.—T. WARTON.

[j] *Et tu (quod superest miseris), &c.*

From many obvious reasons, *At tu* is likely to be the true reading.—T. WARTON.

[k] This wish, as we have seen, came to pass. He returned; and, when at length his party became superior, he was rewarded with appointments of opulence and honour.—T. WARTON.

[l] In point of poetry, sentiment, selection of imagery, facility of versification, and Latinity, this Elegy, written by a boy, is far superior to one of Buchanan's on the same subject, entitled "Maiæ Calendæ."—T. WARTON.

Induiturque brevem Tellus reparata juventam,
  Jamque soluta gelu dulce virescit humus.
Fallor? an et nobis redeunt in carmina vires,
  Ingeniumque mihi munere veris adest [m]?
Munere veris adest, iterumque vigescit ab illo
  (Quis putet?), atque aliquod jam sibi poscit opus.
Castalis ante oculos, bifidumque cacumen oberrat,
  Et mihi Pyrenen somnia nocte ferunt;
Concitaque arcano fervent mihi pectora motu,
  Et furor, et sonitus me sacer intus agit.
Delius ipse venit, video Penëide lauro
  Implicitos crines; Delius ipse venit.
Jam mihi mens liquidi raptatur in ardua cœli,
  Perque vagas nubes corpore liber eo;
Perque umbras, perque antra feror, penetralia vatum,
  Et mihi fana patent interiora deum;
Intuiturque animus toto quid agatur Olympo,
  Nec fugiunt oculos Tartara cæca meos.
Quid tam grande sonat distento spiritus ore?
  Quid parit hæc rabies, quid sacer iste furor?
Ver mihi, quod dedit ingenium, cantabitur illo;
  Profuerint isto reddita dona modo.
Jam, Philomela, tuos, foliis adoperta novellis,
  Instituis modulos, dum silet omne nemus:
Urbe ego, tu sylva, simul incipiamus utrique,
  Et simul adventum veris uterque canat.
Veris, io! rediere vices; celebremus honores
  Veris, et hoc subeat Musa perennis opus.
Jam sol, Æthiopas fugiens Tithoniaque arva,
  Flectit ad Arctöas aurea lora plagas.
Est breve noctis iter, brevis est mora noctis opacæ,
  Horrida cum tenebris exulat illa suis:
Jamque Lycaonius, plaustrum cœleste, Boötes
  Non longa sequitur fessus ut ante via;
Nunc etiam solitas circum Jovis atria toto
  Excubias agitant sidera rara polo:
Nam dolus, et cædes, et vis cum nocte recessit,
  Neve Giganteum Di timuere scelus.
Forte aliquis scopuli recubans in vertice pastor,
  Roscida cum primo sole rubescit humus,
Hac, ait, hac certe caruisti nocte puella,
  Phœbe, tua, celeres quæ retineret equos.
Læta suas repetit silvas, pharetramque resumit
  Cynthia, luciferas ut videt alta rotas;

[m] *Ingeniumque mihi munere veris adest?*

See v. 23. There is a notion that Milton could write verses only in the spring or summer, which perhaps is countenanced by these passages: but what poetical mind does not feel an expansion or invigoration at the return of the spring;—at that renovation of the face of nature, with which every mind is in some degree affected?—T. Warton.

Et, tenues ponens radios, gaudere videtur
  Officium fieri tam breve fratris ope.
"Desere," Phœbus ait, "thalamos, Aurora, seniles;
  Quid juvat effœto procubuisse toro?
Te manet Æolides[n] viridi venator in herba;
  Surge, tuos ignes altus Hymettus habet."
Flava verecundo dea crimen in ore fatetur,
  Et matutinos ocyus urget equos.
Exuit invisam Tellus rediviva senectam,
  Et cupit amplexus, Phœbe, subire tuos;
Et cupit, et digna est: quid enim formosius illa,
  Pandit ut omniferos luxuriosa sinus,
Atque Arabum spirat messes, et ab ore venusto
  Mitia cum Paphiis fundit amoma rosis!
Ecce! coronatur sacro frons ardua luco,
  Cingit ut Idæam pinea turris Opim;
Et vario madidos intexit flore capillos,
  Floribus et visa est posse placere suis.
Floribus effusos ut erat redimita capillos,
  Tænario placuit diva Sicana deo.
Aspice, Phœbe; tibi faciles hortantur amores,
  Mellitasque movent flamina verna preces:
Cinnamea Zephyrus leve plaudit odorifer ala,
  Blanditiasque tibi ferre videntur aves.
Nec sine dote tuos temeraria quærit amores
  Terra, nec optatos poscit egena toros;
Alma salutiferum medicos tibi gramen in usus
  Præbet, et hinc titulos adjuvat ipsa tuos:
Quod, si te pretium, si te fulgentia tangunt
  Munera (muneribus sæpe coemptus amor),
Illa tibi ostentat quascunque sub æquore vasto,
  Et superinjectis montibus, abdit opes.
Ah, quoties, cum tu clivoso fessus Olympo
  In vespertinas præcipitaris aquas,
"Cur te," inquit, "cursu languentem, Phœbe, diurno
  Hesperiis recipit cærula mater aquis?
Quid tibi cum Tethy? Quid cum Tartesside lympha?
  Dia quid immundo perluis ora salo?
Frigora, Phœbe, mea melius captabis in umbra;
  Huc ades, ardentes imbue rore comas.
Mollior egelida veniet tibi somnus in herba;
  Huc ades, et gremio lumina pone meo:
Quaque jaces, circum mulcebit lene susurrans
  Aura per humentes corpora fusa rosas;

[n] *Te manet Æolides, &c.*

Cephalus, with whom Aurora fell in love as she saw him hunting on Mount Hymettus. And Cephalus is "the Attick boy," with whom Aurora was accustomed to hunt, 'Il Pens.' v. 124.—T. WARTON.

Nec me (crede mihi) terrent Semelëia fata,
  Nec Phaetonteo fumidus axis equo:
Cum tu, Phœbe, tuo sapientius uteris igni [o];
  Huc ades, et gremio lumina pone meo."
Sic Tellus lasciva suos suspirat amores;
  Matris in exemplum cætera turba ruunt:
Nunc etenim toto currit vagus orbe Cupido,
  Languentesque fovet solis ab igne faces:
Insonuere novis lethalia cornua nervis,
  Triste micant ferro tela corusca novo:
Jamque vel invictam tentat superasse Dianam,
  Quæque sedet sacro Vesta pudica foco.
Ipsa senescentem reparat Venus annua formam,
  Atque iterum tepido creditur orta mari.
Marmoreas juvenes clamant Hymenæe! per urbes;
  Littus, Io Hymen! et cava saxa sonant.
Cultior ille venit, tunicaque decentior apta,
  Puniceum redolet vestis odora crocum.
Egrediturque frequens, ad amœni gaudia veris,
  Virgineos auro cincta puella sinus:
Votum est cuique suum, votum est tamen omnibus unum,
  Ut sibi, quem cupiat, det Cytherea virum:
Nunc quoque septena modulatur arundine pastor,
  Et sua, quæ jungat, carmina Phyllis habet.
Navita nocturno placat sua sidera cantu,
  Delphinasque leves ad vada summa vocat:
Jupiter ipse alto cum conjuge ludit Olympo,
  Convocat et famulos ad sua festa deos:
Nunc etiam Satyri, cum sera crepuscula surgunt,
  Pervolitant celeri florea rura choro;
Sylvanusque sua cyparissi fronde revinctus,
  Semicaperque deus, semideusque caper:
Quæque sub arboribus Dryades latuere vetustis,
  Per juga, per solos, exspatiantur agros.
Per sata luxuriat fructicetaque Mænalius Pan;
  Vix Cybele mater, vix sibi tuta Ceres;
Atque aliquam cupidus prædatur Oreada Faunus,
  Consulit in trepidos dum sibi nympha pedes;
Jamque latet, latitansque cupit male tecta videri;
  Et fugit, et fugiens pervelit ipsa capi.
Di quoque non dubitant cœlo præponere sylvas,
  Et sua quisque sibi numina lucus habet:
Et sua quisque diu sibi numina lucus habeto,
  Nec vos arborea, Di, precor, ite domo.
Te referant miseris, te, Jupiter, aurea terris
  Sæcla; quid ad nimbos aspera tela redis?

[o] More wisely than when you lent your chariot to Phaëton, and when I was consumed "by the excess of your heat." He alludes to the speech or complaint of Tellus, in the story of Phaëton. See Metam. ii. 272.—T. Warton.

Tu saltem lente rapidos age, Phœbe, jugales,
Qua potes, et sensim tempora veris eant;
Brumaque productas tarde ferat hispida noctes,
Ingruat et nostro serior umbra polo.

ELEG. VI.

Ad CAROLUM DEODATUM ruri commorantem, qui cum Idibus Decemb. scripsisset, et sua carmina excusari postulasset si solito minus essent bona, quod inter lautitias, quibus erat ab amicis exceptus, haud satis felicem operam Musis dare se posse affirmabat, hoc habuit responsum:—

MITTO tibi sanam non pleno ventre salutem,
Qua tu, distento, forte carere potes.
At tua quid nostram prolectat Musa Camœnam,
Nec sinit optatas posse sequi tenebras?
Carmine scire velis quam te redamemque colamque;
Crede mihi, vix hoc carmine scire queas:
Nam neque noster amor modulis includitur arctis,
Nec venit ad claudos integer ipse pedes.
Quam bene solennes epulas hilaremque Decembrem,
Festaque cœlifugam quæ coluere deum,
Deliciasque refers, hiberni gaudia ruris,
Haustaque per lepidos Gallica musta focos [p]!
Quid quereris refugam vino dapibusque poesin?
Carmen amat Bacchum, carmina Bacchus amat:
Nec puduit Phœbum virides gestasse corymbos,
Atque hederam lauro præposuisse suæ.
Sæpius Aoniis clamavit collibus, Euœ!
Mista Thyoneo turba novena choro.
Naso Corallæis mala carmina misit ab agris;
Non illic epulæ, non sata vitis erat.
Quid nisi vina, rosasque, racemiferumque Lyæum,
Cantavit brevibus Tëia Musa modis?
Pindaricosque inflat numeros Teumesius Euan [q],
Et redolet sumptum pagina quæque merum;
Dum gravis everso currus crepat axe supinus,
Et volat Eleo pulvere fuscus eques.
Quadrimoque madens lyricen Romanus Iaccho,
Dulce canit Glyceran, flavicomamque Chloen.
Jam quoque lauta tibi generoso mensa paratu
Mentis alit vires, ingeniumque fovet.
Massica fœcundam despumant pocula venam,
Fundis et ex ipso condita metra cado.

[p] *Haustaque per lepidos Gallica musta focos!*

Deodate had sent Milton a copy of verses, in which he described the festivities of Christmas.—T. WARTON.

[q] *Teumesius Euan.*

Teumesus is a mountain of Bœotia, the district in which Thebes was situated; and its inhabitants were called Teumesii. Milton here puzzles his readers with minute and unnecessary learning. The meaning of the line is this:—"The Theban god Bacchus inspires the numbers of his congenial Pindar, the Theban poet."—T. WARTON.

Addimus his artes, fusumque per intima Phœbum
  Corda; favent uni Bacchus, Apollo, Ceres.
Scilicet haud mirum, tam dulcia carmina per te,
  Numine composito, tres peperisse deos.
Nunc quoque Thressa tibi [r] cælato barbitos auro
  Insonat, arguta molliter icta manu;
Auditurque chelys suspensa tapetia circum [s],
  Virgineos tremula quæ regat arte pedes.
Illa tuas saltem teneant spectacula Musas,
  Et revocent, quantum crapula pellit iners.
Crede mihi, dum psallit ebur, comitataque plectrum
  Implet odoratos festa chorea tholos,
Percipies tacitum per pectora serpere Phœbum,
  Quale repentinus permeat ossa calor;
Perque puellares oculos, digitumque sonantem,
  Irruet in totos lapsa Thalia sinus.
Namque Elegia levis multorum cura deorum est,
  Et vocat ad numeros quemlibet illa suos;
Liber adest elegis, Eratoque, Ceresque, Venusque,
  Et cum purpurea matre tenellus Amor.
Talibus inde licent convivia larga poetis,
  Sæpius et veteri commaduisse mero.
At qui bella refert [t], et adulto sub Jove cœlum,
  Heroasque pios, semideosque duces,
Et nunc sancta canit superum consulta deorum,
  Nunc latrata fero regna profunda cane;
Ille quidem parce, Samii pro more magistri,
  Vivat, et innocuos præbeat herba cibos;
Stet prope fagineo pellucida lympha catillo,
  Sobriaque e puro pocula fonte bibat.
Additur huic scelerisque vacans, et casta juventus,
  Et rigidi mores, et sine labe manus:
Qualis, veste nitens sacra, et lustralibus undis,
  Surgis ad infensos, augur, iture deos.
Hoc ritu vixisse ferunt post rapta sagacem
  Lumina Tiresian, Ogygiumque Linon,
Et lare devoto profugum Calchanta, senemque
  Orpheon, edomitis sola per antra feris;

[r] *Nunc quoque Thressa tibi, &c.*

The Thracian harp. Orpheus was of Thrace.—T. WARTON.

[s] *Auditurque chelys suspensa tapetia circum, &c.*

Mr. Warton has observed, that here is a reference to the mode of furnishing halls or state-apartments with tapestry, which had not ceased in Milton's time. Compare 'Comus,' v. 324.—TODD.

[t] *At qui bella refert, &c.*

Ovid, Anacreon, Pindar, and Horace indulged in convivial festivity; and this also is an indulgence which must be allowed to the professed writer of elegies and odes: but the epic poet, who has a more serious and important task, must live sparingly, according to the dictates of Pythagoras. Milton's panegyrics on temperance, both in eating and drinking, resulting from his own practice, are frequent.—T. WARTON.

Sic dapis exiguus, sic rivi potor Homerus
  Dulichium vexit per freta longa virum,
Et per monstrificam Perseiæ Phœbados aulam [u],
  Et vada fœmineis insidiosa sonis;
Perque tuas, rex ime, domos, ubi sanguine nigro
  Dicitur umbrarum detinuisse greges.
Dis etenim sacer est vates, divumque sacerdos;
  Spirat et occultum pectus, et ora, Jovem.
At tu, siquid agam, scitabere (si modo saltem
  Esse putas tanti noscere siquid agam),
Paciferum canimus cœlesti semine Regem,
  Faustaque sacratis sæcula pacta libris;
Vagitumque Dei, et stabulantem paupere tecto,
  Qui suprema suo cum Patre regna colit;
Stelliparumque polum, modulantesque æthere turmas,
  Et subito elisos ad sua fana deos.
Dona quidem dedimus Christi natalibus illa,
  Illa sub auroram lux mihi prima tulit.
Te quoque pressa manent patriis meditata cicutis [v];
  Tu mihi, cui recitem, judicis instar eris.

ELEG. VII.

ANNO ÆTATIS 19.

Nondum, blanda, tuas leges, Amathusia, noram,
  Et Paphio vacuum pectus ab igne fuit.
Sæpe cupidineas, puerilia tela, sagittas,
  Atque tuum sprevi, maxime, numen, Amor.
Tu, puer, imbelles, dixi, transfige columbas;
  Conveniunt tenero mollia bella duci:
Aut de passeribus timidos age, parve, triumphos:
  Hæc sunt militiæ digna tropæa tuæ.
In genus humanum quid inania dirigis arma?
  Non valet in fortes ista pharetra viros.
Non tulit hoc Cyprius, neque enim deus ullus ad iras
  Promptior, et duplici jam ferus igne calet.
Ver erat, et summæ radians per culmina villæ
  Attulerat primam lux tibi, Maie, diem:
At mihi adhuc refugam quærebant lumina noctem,
  Nec matutinum sustinuere jubar [w].

[u] *Et per monstrificam Perseiæ Phœbados aulam.*

Circe was the daughter of the Sun, and, as some say, of Hecate.—T. Warton.

[v] *Te quoque pressa manent patriis meditata cicutis.*

His English 'Ode on the Nativity.' This he means to submit to Deodate's inspection. "You shall next have some of my English poetry."

The transitions and connexions of this Elegy are conducted with the skill and address of a master, and form a train of allusions and digressions productive of fine sentiment and poetry. From a trifling and unimportant circumstance, the reader is gradually led to great and lofty imagery.—T. Warton.

[w] *At mihi adhuc refugam quærebant lumina noctem,*
Nec matutinum sustinuere jubar.

Here is the elegance of poetical expression, but he really complains of the weak-

Astat Amor lecto, pictis Amor impiger alis;
  Prodidit astantem mota pharetra deum:
Prodidit et facies, et dulce minantis ocelli,
  Et quicquid puero dignum et Amore fuit.
Talis in æterno juvenis Sigeius Olympo
  Miscet amatori pocula plena Jovi;
Aut, qui formosas pellexit ad oscula nymphas,
  Thiodamantæus Naide raptus Hylas.
Addideratque iras, sed et has decuisse putares;
  Addideratque truces, nec sine felle, minas:
Et,—"Miser, exemplo sapuisses tutius," inquit:
  "Nunc, mea quid possit dextera, testis eris:
Inter et expertos vires numerabere nostras,
  Et faciam vero per tua damna fidem.
Ipse ego, si nescis, strato Pythone superbum
  Edomui Phœbum, cessit et ille mihi;
Et quoties meminit Peneidos, ipse fatetur
  Certius et gravius tela nocere mea.
Me nequit adductum curvare peritius arcum,
  Qui post terga solet vincere, Parthus eques:
Cydoniusque mihi [x] cedit venator, et ille [y]
  Inscius uxori qui necis auctor erat.
Est etiam nobis ingens quoque victus Orion [z],
  Herculeæque manus, Herculeusque comes.
Jupiter ipse licet sua fulmina torqueat in me,
  Hærebunt lateri spicula nostra Jovis.
Cætera, quæ dubitas, melius mea tela docebunt,
  Et tua non leviter corda petenda mihi:
Nec te, stulte, tuæ poterunt defendere Musæ,
  Nec tibi Phœbæus porriget anguis opem [a]."
Dixit; et, aurato quatiens mucrone sagittam,
  Evolat in tepidos Cypridos ille sinus.
At mihi risuro tonuit ferus ore minaci,
  Et mihi de puero non metus ullus erat:
Et modo qua nostri spatiantur in urbe Quirites,
  Et modo villarum proxima rura placent.

ness of his eyes, which began early. He has "light unsufferable,"—'Ode Nativ.' v. 8.—T. Warton.

[x] *Cydoniusque mihi, &c.*

Perhaps indefinitely, as the "Parthus eques," just before. The Cydonians were famous for hunting, which implies archery. If a person is here intended, he is most probably Hippolytus. Cydon was a city of Crete. But then he is mentioned here as an archer. Virgil ranks the Cydonians with the Parthians for their skill in the bow, Æn. xii. 852.—T. Warton.

[y] *Et ille, &c.*

Cephalus, who unknowingly shot his wife Procris.—T. Warton.

[z] *Est etiam nobis ingens quoque victus Orion.*

Orion was also a famous hunter.—T. Warton.

[a] *Nec tibi Phœbæus porriget anguis opem.*

"No medicine will avail you: not even the serpent, which Phœbus sent to Rome to cure the city of a pestilence." Ovid, Metam. xv. 742.—T. Warton.

Turba[b] frequens, facieque simillima turba dearum,
Splendida per medias itque reditque vias;
Auctaque luce dies gemino fulgore coruscat:
Fallor? An et radios hinc quoque Phœbus habet?
Hæc ego non fugi spectacula grata severus;
Impetus et quo me fert juvenilis, agor;
Lumina luminibus male providus obvia misi,
Neve oculos potui continuisse meos.
Unam forte aliis supereminuisse notabam:
Principium nostri lux erat illa mali.
Sic Venus optaret mortalibus ipsa videri,
Sic regina deum conspicienda fuit.
Hanc memor objecit nobis malus ille Cupido,
Solus et hos nobis texuit ante dolos:
Nec procul ipse vafer latuit, multæque sagittæ,
Et facis a tergo grande pependit onus:
Nec mora; nunc ciliis hæsit, nunc virginis ori;
Insilit hinc labiis, insidet inde genis:
Et quascunque agilis partes jaculator oberrat,
Hei mihi! mille locis pectus inerme ferit.
Protinus insoliti subierunt corda furores;
Uror amans intus, flammaque totus eram.
Interea, misero quæ jam mihi sola placebat,
Ablata est oculis, non reditura[c], meis.
Ast ego progredior tacite querebundus, et excors,
Et dubius volui sæpe referre pedem.
Findor, et hæc remanet: sequitur pars altera votum,
Raptaque tam subito gaudia flere juvat.
Sic dolet amissum proles Junonia cœlum,
Inter Lemniacos præcipitata focos:
Talis et abreptum solem respexit, ad Orcum
Vectus ab attonitis Amphiaraus equis.
Quid faciam infelix, et luctu victus? Amores
Nec licet inceptos ponere, neve sequi.
O, utinam, spectare semel mihi detur amatos
Vultus, et coram tristia verba loqui!
Forsitan et duro non est adamante creata,
Forte nec ad nostras surdeat illa preces!
Crede mihi, nullus sic infeliciter arsit;
Ponar in exemplo primus et unus ego.
Parce, precor, teneri cum sis deus ales amoris,
Pugnent officio nec tua facta tuo.

[b] *Turba, &c.*

In Milton's youth, the fashionable places of walking in London were Hyde-Park, and Gray's-Inn Walks.—T. WARTON.

[c] *Non reditura.*

He saw the unknown lady, who had thus won his heart, but once. The fervour of his love is inimitably expressed in the following lines.—TODD.

Jam tuus, O! certe est mihi formidabilis arcus,
Nate dea, jaculis, nec minus igne, potens:
Et tua fumabunt nostris altaria donis,
Solus et in superis tu mihi summus eris.
Deme meos tandem, verum nec deme, furores;
Nescio cur, miser est suaviter omnis amans[d]:
Tu modo da facilis, posthæc mea siqua futura est,
Cuspis amaturos figat ut una duos.

Hæc ego[e], mente olim læva, studioque supino,
Nequitiæ posui vana tropæa meæ.
Scilicet abreptum sic me malus impulit error,
Indocilisque ætas prava magistra fuit;
Donec Socraticos umbrosa Academia rivos
Præbuit, admissum dedocuitque jugum.
Protinus, extinctis ex illo tempore flammis,
Cincta rigent multo pectora nostra gelu:
Unde suis frigus metuit puer ipse sagittis,
Et Diomedeam vim timet ipsa Venus.

EPIGRAMMATUM LIBER.

I.—IN PRODITIONEM BOMBARDICAM.

Cum simul in regem nuper satrapasque Britannos
Ausus es infandum, perfide Fauxe, nefas,
Fallor? An et mitis voluisti ex parte videri,
Et pensare mala cum pietate scelus?
Scilicet hos alti missurus ad atria cœli,
Sulphureo curru, flammivolisque rotis:
Qualiter ille, feris caput inviolabile Parcis,
Liquit Iördanios turbine raptus agros.

[d] *Deme meos tandem, verum nec deme, furores;*
Nescio cur, miser est suaviter omnis amans.

There never was a more beautiful description of the irresolution of love. He wishes to have his woe removed, but recals his wish; preferring the sweet misery of those who love. Thus Eloisa wavers, in Pope's fine poem :—

Unequal task! a passion to resign
For hearts so touch'd, so pierced, so lost, as mine.—Todd.

[e] *Hæc ego, &c.*

These lines are an epilogistic palinode to the last Elegy. The Socratic doctrines of the shady Academe soon broke the bonds of beauty: in other words, his return to the university. They were probably written when the Latin poems were prepared for the press in 1645.—T. Warton.

II.—IN EANDEM.

Siccine tentasti cœlo donasse Iäcobum,
  Quæ septemgemino, Bellua[a], monte lates?
Ni meliora tuum poterit dare munera numen,
  Parce, precor, donis insidiosa tuis.
Ille quidem sine te consortia serus adivit
  Astra, nec inferni pulveris usus ope.
Sic potius fœdus in cœlum pelle cucullos,
  Et quot habet brutos Roma profana deos:
Namque hac aut alia nisi quemque adjuveris arte,
  Crede mihi, cœli vix bene scandet iter.

III.—IN EANDEM.

Purgatorem animæ derisit Iäcobus ignem,
  Et sine quo superum non adeunda domus.
Frenduit hoc trina monstrum Latiale corona,
  Movit et horrificum cornua dena minax.
"Et nec inultus," ait, "temnes mea sacra, Britanne:
  Supplicium, spreta relligione, dabis:
Et, si stelligeras unquam penetraveris arces,
  Non nisi per flammas triste patebit iter."
O, quam funesto cecinisti proxima vero,
  Verbaque ponderibus vix caritura suis!
Nam prope Tartareo sublime rotatus ab igni,
  Ibat ad æthereas, umbra perusta, plagas.

IV.—IN EANDEM.

Quem modo Roma suis devoverat impia diris,
  Et Styge damnarat, Tænarioque sinu;
Hunc, vice mutata, jam tollere gestit ad astra,
  Et cupit ad superos evehere usque deos.

V.—IN INVENTOREM BOMBARDÆ.

Iapetioniden laudavit cæca vetustas,
  Qui tulit æthercam solis ab axe facem;
At mihi major erit, qui lurida creditur arma,
  Et trifidum fulmen, surripuisse Jovi.

VI.—AD LEONAORAM ROMÆ CANENTEM[b].

Angelus unicuique suus, sic credite gentes,
  Obtigit æthereis ales ab ordinibus.
Quid mirum, Leonora, tibi si gloria major?
  Nam tua præsentem vox sonat ipsa Deum.

[a] *Quæ septemgemino, Bellua, &c.*
The Pope, called, in the theological language of the times, "The Beast."—T. Warton.

[b] Adriana of Mantua, for her beauty surnamed the Fair, and her daughter Leonora Baroni, the lady whom Milton celebrates in these three Latin Epigrams, were esteemed by their contemporaries the finest singers in the world. When Milton was at Rome, he was introduced to the concerts of Cardinal Barberini, where he heard Leonora sing and her mother play. It was the fashion for all the ingenious strangers, who visited Rome, to leave some verses on Leonora.—T. Warton.

Aut Deus, aut vacui certe mens tertia cœli,
  Per tua secreto guttura serpit agens;
Serpit agens, facilisque docet mortalia corda
  Sensim immortali assuescere posse sono.
Quod si cuncta quidem Deus est, per cunctaque fusus,
  In te una loquitur, cætera mutus habet.

VII.—AD EANDEM.

Altera Torquatum cepit Leonora[c] poetam,
  Cujus ab insano cessit amore furens.
Ah! miser ille tuo quanto felicius ævo
  Perditus, et propter te, Leonora, foret!
Et te Pieria sensisset voce canentem
  Aurea maternæ filia movere lyræ!
Quamvis Dircæo torsisset lumina Pentheo[d]
  Sævior, aut totus desipuisset iners,
Tu tamen errantes cæca vertigine sensus
  Voce eadem poteras composuisse tua;
Et poteras, ægro spirans sub corde, quietem
  Flexanimo cantu restituisse sibi.

VIII.—AD EANDEM.

Credula quid liquidam Sirena, Neapoli, jactas,
  Claraque Parthenopes[e] fana Achelöiados;
Littoreamque tua defunctam Naiada ripa,
  Corpora Chalcidico sacra dedisse rogo?
Illa quidem vivitque, et amœna Tibridis unda
  Mutavit rauci murmura Pausilipi[f].
Illic, Romulidum studiis ornata secundis,
  Atque homines cantu detinet atque deos.

IX.—IN SALMASII HUNDREDAM[g].

Quis expedivit Salmasio suam Hundredam,
Picamque docuit verba nostra conari?

[c] *Altera Torquatum cepit Leonora.*

This allusion to Tasso's Leonora, and the turn which it takes, are inimitably beautiful.—T. Warton.

[d] For the story of Pentheus, a king of Thebes, see Euripides' "Bacchæ," where he sees two suns, &c., v. 916. But Milton, in "torsisset lumina," alludes to the rage of Pentheus in Ovid, Metam. iii. 557:—

Aspicit hunc oculis Pentheus, quos ira tremendos
Fecerat.—T. Warton.

[e] Parthenope's tomb was at Naples: she was one of the sirens.—T. Warton.

[f] *Pausilipi.*

The grotto of Pausilipo, which Milton no doubt had visited with delight.—Todd.

[g] This Epigram is in Milton's 'Defensio' against Salmasius; in the translation of which by Richard Washington, published in 1692, the Epigram is thus anglicised, p. 187:—

Who taught Salmasius, that French chattering pye,
To aim at English, and Hundreda cry?

Magister artis venter, et Jacobæi
Centum, exulantis viscera marsupii regis[h].
Quod si dolosi spes refulserit nummi,
Ipse, Antichristi qui modo primatum Papæ
Minatus uno est dissipare sufflatu,
Cantabit ultro Cardinalitium melos.

X.—IN SALMASIUM[i].

Gaudete scombri, et quicquid est piscium salo,
Qui frigida hyeme incolitis algentes freta!
Vestrum misertus ille Salmasius, eques
Bonus, amicire nuditatem cogitat;
Chartæque largus, apparat papyrinos
Vobis cucullos, præferentes Claudii
Insignia, nomenque et decus, Salmasii[j]:
Gestetis ut per omne cetarium forum
Equitis clientes, scriniis mungentium
Cubito[k] virorum, et capsulis, gratissimos.

The starving rascal, flush'd with just a hundred
English Jacobusses, Hundreds blunder'd!
An outlaw'd king's last stock.—A hundred more
Would make him pimp for the antichristian whore;
And in Rome's praise employ his poison'd breath,
Who threaten'd once to stink the Pope to death.—T. Warton.

[h] King Charles II., now in exile, and sheltered in Holland, gave Salmasius, who was a professor at Leyden, one hundred Jacobuses to write his defence, 1649. Wood asserts that Salmasius had no reward for his book: he says, that in Leyden the king sent Dr. Morley, afterwards bishop, to the apologist, with his thanks, "but not with a purse of gold, as John Milton the impudent lyer reported."—"Athen. Oxon." ii. 770.—T. Warton.

This Epigram, as Mr. Warton observes, is an imitation of part of the Prologue to Persius' Satires.—Todd.

[i] This is in the 'Defensio Secunda.' It is introduced with the following ridicule on Morus, the subject of the next Epigram, for having predicted the wonders to be worked by Salmasius's new edition, or rather reply:—"Tu igitur, ut pisciculus ille anteambulo, præcurris balænam Salmasium." Mr. Steevens observes, that this is an idea analogous to Falstaff's—"Here do I walk before thee," &c., although reversed as to the imagery.—T. Warton.

[j] Mr. Warton observes that Milton here sneers at a circumstance which was true: Salmasius was really of an ancient and noble family.—Todd.

[k] "Cubito mungentium," a cant appellation among the Romans for fishmongers.—T. Warton.

Christina, Queen of Sweden, among other learned men who fed her vanity, had invited Salmasius to her court, where he wrote his "Defensio." She had pestered him with Latin letters seven pages long, and told him she would set out for Holland to fetch him if he did not come. When he arrived, he was often indisposed on account of the coldness of the climate; and on these occasions, the queen would herself call on him in a morning: and locking the door of his apartment, used to light his fire, give him breakfast, and stay with him some hours. This behaviour gave rise to scandalous stories, and our critic's wife grew jealous.—It is seemingly a slander, what was first thrown out in the "Mercurius Politicus," that Christina, when Salmasius had published this work, dismissed him with contempt, as a parasite and an advocate of tyranny: but the case was, to say nothing that Christina loved both to be flattered and to tyrannise, Salmasius had now been long preparing to return to Holland, to fulfil his engagements with the university of Leyden: she offered him large rewards and appointments to remain in Sweden, and greatly regretted his departure; and on his

XI.—IN MORUM[l].

Galli ex concubitu gravidam te, Pontia, Mori,
Quis bene moratam, morigeramque, neget?

XII.—APOLOGUS DE RUSTICO ET HERO[m].

Rusticus ex malo sapidissima poma quotannis
Legit, et urbano lecta dedit domino:
Hinc, incredibili fructus dulcedine captus,
Malum ipsam in proprias transtulit areolas.
Hactenus illa ferax, sed longo debilis ævo,
Mota solo assueto, protinus aret iners.
Quod tandem ut patuit domino, spe lusus inani,
Damnavit celeres in sua damna manus;
Atque ait, "Heu quanto satius fuit illa coloni,
Parva licet, grato dona tulisse animo!
Possem ego avaritiam frænare, gulamque voracem:
Nunc periere mihi et fœtus, et ipse parens."

XIII.—AD CHRISTINAM SUECORUM REGINAM, NOMINE CROMWELLI[n]

Bellipotens virgo, septem regina trionum,
Christina, Arctoi lucida stella poli!
Cernis, quas merui dura sub casside rugas,
Utque senex, armis impiger, ora tero:
Invia fatorum dum per vestigia nitor,
Exequor et populi fortia jussa manu.
Ast tibi submittit frontem reverentior umbra;
Nec sunt hi vultus regibus usque truces.

death, very shortly afterwards, she wrote his widow a letter in French, full of concern for his loss, and respect for his memory. Such, however, was Christina's levity, or hypocrisy, or caprice, that it is possible she might have acted inconsistently in some parts of this business.—T. Warton.

[l] From Milton's 'Defensio Secunda,' and his 'Responsio,' to Morus' Supplement. This distich was occasioned by a report, that Morus had debauched a favourite waitingmaid of the wife of Salmasius, Milton's antagonist.—T. Warton.

[m] This piece first appeared in the edition 1673.—Todd.

[n] These lines are simple and sinewy. They present Cromwell in a new and pleasing light, and throw an air of amiable dignity on his rough and obstinate character. They are too great a compliment to Christina, who was contemptible both as a queen and a woman. The uncrowned Cromwell had no reason to approach a princess with so much reverence, who had renounced her crown. The frolics of other whimsical modern queens have been often only romantic; the pranks of Christina had neither elegance nor even decency to deserve so candid an appellation. An ample and lively picture of her court, politics, religion, intrigues, rambles, and masquerades, is to be gathered from Thurloe's "State Papers."—T. Warton.

I have quoted the English version of Milton's epigram to Christina: it appeared as follows, in Toland's life of the poet, fol. 1698, p. 39:—

Bright martial maid, queen of the frozen zone!
The northern pole supports thy shining throne:
Behold what furrows age and steel can plow;
The helmet's weight oppress'd this wrinkled brow.
Through fate's untrodden paths I move; my hands
Still act my free-born people's bold commands:
Yet this stern shade to you submits his frowns,
Nor are these looks always severe to crowns.—Todd.

SILVARUM LIBER.

PSALM CXIV[a].

'ΙΣΡΑΗ'Λ ὅτε παῖδες, ὅτ' ἀγλαὰ φῦλ' Ἰακώβου
Αἰγύπτιον λίπε δῆμον, ἀπεχθέα, βαρβαρόφωνον,
Δὴ τότε μοῦνον ἔην ὅσιον γένος υἷες Ἰοῦδα.
Ἐν δὲ Θεὸς λαοῖσι μέγα κρείων βασίλευεν.
Εἶδε, καὶ ἐντροπάδην φυγάδ' ἐῤῥώησε θάλασσα
Κύματι εἰλυμένη ῥοθίῳ, ὁδ' ἄρ' ἐστυφελίχθη
Ἱρὸς Ἰορδάνης ποτὶ ἀργυροειδέα πηγήν.
Ἐκ δ' ὄρεα σκαρθμοῖσιν ἀπειρέσια κλονέοντο,
Ὡς κριοὶ σφριγόωντες ἐϋτραφερῷ ἐν ἀλωῇ.
Βαιοτέραι δ' ἅμα πᾶσαι ἀνασκίρτησαν ἐρίπναι,
Οἷα παραὶ σύριγγι φίλῃ ὑπὸ μητέρι ἄρνες.
Τίπτε σύγ', αἰνὰ θάλασσα, πέλωρ φυγάδ' ἐῤῥώησας
Κύματι εἰλυμένη ῥοθίῳ; τί δ' ἄρ ἐστυφελίχθης
Ἱρὸς Ἰορδάνη ποτὶ ἀργυροειδέα πηγήν;
Τίπτ', ὄρεα, σκαρθμοῖσιν ἀπειρέσια κλονέεσθε,
Ὡς κριοὶ σφριγόωντες ἐυτραφερῷ ἐν ἀλωῇ;
Βαιοτέραι τί δ' ἀρ ὔμμες ἀνασκιρτήσατ', ἐρίπναι,
Οἷα παραὶ σύριγγι φιλῃ ὑπὸ μητέρι ἄρνες;
Σείεο, γαῖα, τρέουσα Θεὸν μεγάλ' ἐκτυπέοντα,
Γαῖα, Θεὸν τρείουσ' ὕπατον σέβας Ἰσσακίδαο,
Ὅς τε καὶ ἐκ σπιλάδων ποταμοὺς χέε μορμύροντας,
Κρήνην τ' ἀέναον πέτρης ἀπὸ δακρυοέσσης.

Philosophus ad regem quendam, qui eum ignotum et insontem inter reos forte captum inscius damnaverat, τὴν ἐπὶ θανάτῳ πορευόμενος, hæc subito misit:—

Ω 'ΑΝΑ, εἰ ὀλέσῃς με τὸν ἔννομον, οὐδέ τιν' ἀνδρῶν
Δεινὸν ὅλως δράσαντα, σοφώτατον ἴσθι κάρηνον
Ῥηϊδίως ἀφέλοιο, τὸ δ' ὕστερον αὖθι νοήσεις,
Μαψιδίως δ' ἀρ ἔπειτα τεὸν πρὸς θυμὸν ὀδυρῇ,
Τοιόν δ' ἐκ πόλιος περιώνυμον ἄλκαρ ὀλέσσας.

IN EFFIGIEI EJUS SCULPTOREM.

'ΑΜΑΘΕΙ͂ γεγράφθαι χειρὶ τήνδε μὲν εἰκόνα
Φαίης τάχ' ἄν, πρὸς εἶδος αὐτοφυὲς βλέπων.
Τὸν δ' ἐκτυπωτὸν οὐκ ἐπιγνόντες, φίλοι,
Γελᾶτε φαύλου δυσμίμημα ζωγράφου.

[a] Milton sent this translation to his friend Alexander Gill, in return for an elegant copy of hendecasyllables.—T. Warton.

IN OBITUM PROCANCELLARII MEDICI [b].

ANNO ÆTATIS 17.

PARERE fati discite legibus,
Manusque Parcæ jam date supplices,
Qui pendulum telluris orbem
Iapeti colitis nepotes.
Vos si relicto mors vaga Tænaro
Semel vocarit flebilis, heu! moræ
Tentantur incassum, dolique;
Per tenebras Stygis ire certum est.
Si destinatam pellere dextera
Mortem valeret, non ferus Hercules,
Nessi venenatus cruore,
Æmathia jacuisset Œta:
Nec fraude turpi Palladis invidæ
Vidisset occisum Ilion Hectora, aut
Quem larva Pelidis [c] peremit
Ense Locro, Jove lacrymante.
Si triste fatum [d] verba Hecateia
Fugare possint, Telegoni parens
Vixisset infamis, potentique
Ægiali [e] soror usa virga.
Numenque trinum fallere si queant
Artes medentum, ignotaque gramina;
Non gnarus herbarum Machaon [f]
Eurypyli cecidisset hasta:
Læsisset et nec te, Philyreie [g],
Sagitta Echidnæ perlita sanguine;
Nec tela te [h] fulmenque avitum,
Cæse puer genetricis alvo:

[b] This Ode is on the death of Dr. John Goslyn, master of Caius college, and king's professor of medicine at Cambridge; who died while a second time vice-chancellor of that university, in October, 1626. Milton was now seventeen.—T. WARTON.

[c] *Quem larva Pelidis, &c.*

Sarpedon, who was slain by Patroclus, disguised in the armour of Achilles. At his death his father wept a shower of blood. See Iliad. xvi.—T. WARTON.

[d] *Si triste fatum, &c.*

"If enchantments could have stopped death, Circe, the mother of Telegonus by Ulysses, would have still lived; and Medea, the sister of Ægialus or Absyrtus, with her magical rod." Telegonus killed his father Ulysses, and is the same who is called "parricida" by Horace.—T. WARTON.

[e] Absyrtus is called "Ægialius" by Justin, Hist. lib. xliii. cap. 3, speaking of Jason and Æetes:—"Filiam ejus Medeam abduxerat, et filium Ægialium interfecerat."—TODD.

[f] *Machaon.*

Machaon, the son of Æsculapius, one of the Grecian leaders at the siege of Troy, and a physician, was killed by Eurypylus.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Philyreie, &c.*

Chiron, the son of Philyra, a preceptor in medicine, was incurably wounded by Hercules, with a dart dipped in the poisonous blood of the serpent of Lerna.—T. WARTON.

[h] *Nec tela te, &c.*

Æsculapius, who was cut out of his mother's womb by his father Apollo. Jupiter struck him dead with lightning, for restoring Hippolytus to life.—T. WARTON.

Tuque, O, alumno major Apolline,
Gentis togatæ cui regimen datum,
Frondosa quem nunc Cirrha luget,
Et mediis Helicon in undis,
Jam præfuisses Palladio gregi
Lætus, superstes, nec sine gloria;
Nec puppe lustrasses Charontis
Horribiles barathri recessus.
At fila rupit Persephone tua,
Irata, cum te viderit artibus,
Succoque pollenti, tot atris
Faucibus eripuisse mortis.
Colende Præses, membra, precor, tua
Molli quiescant cespite, et ex tuo
Crescant rosæ calthæque busto,
Purpureoque hyacinthus ore.
Sit mite de te judicium Æaci,
Subrideatque Ætnæa Proserpina;
Interque felices perennis
Elysio spatiere campo.

IN QUINTUM NOVEMBRIS[1].

ANNO ÆTATIS 17.

JAM pius extrema veniens Iäcobus ab arcto,
Teucrigenas populos, lateque patentia regna
Albionum tenuit; jamque inviolabile fœdus
Sceptra Caledoniis conjunxerat Anglica Scotis:
Pacificusque novo, felix divesque, sedebat
In solio, occultique doli securus et hostis:
Cum ferus ignifluo regnans Acheronte tyrannus,
Eumenidum pater, æthereo vagus exul Olympo,
Forte per immensum terrarum erraverat orbem,
Dinumerans sceleris socios, vernasque fideles,
Participes regni post funera mœsta futuros:
Hic tempestates medio ciet aëre diras,
Illic unanimes odium struit inter amicos,
Armat et invictas in mutua viscera gentes;
Regnaque olivifera vertit florentia pace:.
Et quoscunque videt puræ virtutis amantes,
Hos cupit adjicere imperio, fraudumque magister
Tentat inaccessum sceleri corrumpere pectus;
Insidiasque locat tacitas, cassesque latentes
Tendit, ut incautos rapiat; ceu Caspia tigris
Insequitur trepidam deserta per avia prædam
Nocte sub illuni, et somno nictantibus astris:

[1] I have formerly remarked, that this little poem, as containing a council, conspiracy, and expedition of Satan, may be considered as an early and promising prolusion of Milton's genius to the 'Paradise Lost.'—T. WARTON.

Talibus infestat populos Summanus[j] et urbes,
Cinctus cæruleæ fumanti turbine flammæ.
Jamque fluentisonis albentia rupibus arva
Apparent, et terra deo dilecta marino,
Cui nomen dederat quondam Neptunia proles;
Amphitryoniaden qui non dubitavit atrocem,
Æquore tranato, furiali poscere bello,
Ante expugnatæ crudelia sæcula Trojæ.
At simul hanc, opibusque et festa pace beatam,
Aspicit, et pingues donis Cerealibus agros,
Quodque magis doluit, venerantem numina veri
Sancta Dei populum, tandem suspiria rupit
Tartareos ignes et luridum olentia sulphur;
Qualia Trinacria trux ab Jove clausus in Ætna
Efflat tabifico monstrosus ab ore Tiphœus.
Ignescunt oculi, stridetque adamantinus ordo
Dentis, ut armorum fragor, ictaque cuspide cuspis.
Atque,—"Pererrato solum hoc lacrymabile mundo
Inveni," dixit; "gens hæc mihi sola rebellis,
Contemtrixque jugi, nostraque potentior arte.
Illa tamen, mea si quicquam tentamina possunt,
Non feret hoc impune diu, non ibit inulta."
Hactenus; et piccis liquido natat aëre pennis:
Qua volat, adversi præcursant agmine venti,
Densantur nubes, et crebra tonitrua fulgent.
Jamque pruinosas velox superaverat Alpes,
Et tenet Ausoniæ fines; a parte sinistra
Nimbifer Apenninus erat, priscique Sabini,
Dextra veneficiis infamis Hetruria, necnon
Te furtiva, Tibris, Thetidi videt oscula dantem;
Hinc Mavortigenæ consistit in arce Quirini.
Reddiderant dubiam jam sera crepuscula lucem,
Cum circumgreditur[k] totam Tricoronifer urbem,
Panificosque deos portat, scapulisque virorum
Evehitur; præeunt submisso poplite reges,
Et mendicantum series longissima fratrum[l];
Cereaque in manibus gestant funalia cæci,
Cimmeriis nati in tenebris, vitamque trahentes:
Templa dein multis subeunt lucentia tædis
(Vesper erat sacer iste Petro), fremitusque canentum
Sæpe tholos implet vacuos, et inane locorum.

[j] *Summanus.*

"Summanus" is an obsolete and uncommon name for Pluto, or the god of ghosts and night, "summus Manium," which Milton most probably had from Ovid, "Fast." vi. 731.—T. WARTON.

[k] *Cum circumgreditur, &c.*

He describes the procession of the Pope to St. Peter's church at Rome, on the eve of St. Peter's day.—T. WARTON.

[l] The orders of mendicant friars.—T. WARTON.

Qualiter exululat Bromius, Bromiique caterva,
Orgia cantantes in Echionio Aracyntho,
Dum tremit attonitus vitreis Asopus in undis,
Et procul ipse cava responsat rupe Cithæron.
His igitur tandem solenni more peractis,
Nox senis amplexus Erebi taciturna reliquit,
Præcipitesque impellit equos stimulante flagello,
Captum oculis Typhlonta, Melanchætemque ferocem,
Atque Acherontæo prognatam patre Siopen
Torpidam, et hirsutis horrentem Phrica capillis.
Interea regum domitor, Phlegetontius hæres,
Ingreditur thalamos, neque enim secretus adulter
Producit steriles molli sine pellice noctes;
At vix compositos somnus claudebat ocellos,
Cum niger umbrarum dominus, rectorque silentum,
Prædatorque hominum, falsa sub imagine tectus
Astitit; assumtis micuerunt tempora canis;
Barba sinus promissa tegit; cineracea longo
Syrmate verrit humum vestis, pendetque cucullus
Vertice de raso; et, ne quicquam desit ad artes,
Cannabeo lumbos constrinxit fune salaces,
Tarda fenestratis figens vestigia calceis.
Talis, uti fama est, vasta Franciscus eremo[m]
Tetra vagabatur solus per lustra ferarum,
Silvestrique tulit genti pia verba salutis
Impius, atque lupos domuit, Libycosque leones.
Subdolus at tali Serpens velatus amictu,
Solvit in has fallax ora execrantia voces:—
"Dormis, nate? Etiamne tuos sopor opprimit artus?
Immemor, O, fidei, pecorumque oblite tuorum!
Dum cathedram, venerande, tuam, diademaque triplex,
Ridet Hyperboreo gens barbara nata sub axe;
Dumque pharetrati spernunt tua jura Britanni:
Surge, age; surge, piger, Latius quem Cæsar adorat,
Cui reserata patet convexi janua cœli,
Turgentes animos, et fastus frange procaces;
Sacrilegique sciant, tua quid maledictio possit,

[m] *Cannabeo lumbos constrinxit fune salaces,*
Tarda fenestratis figens vestigia calceis.
Talis, uti fama est, vasta Franciscus eremo, &c.

Francis Xavier, called "the Apostle of the Indians," whom he was sent to convert, about the year 1542, by Ignatius Loyola: he encountered a variety of perils in the Eastern deserts, which he traversed in a short black gown of canvas or sackcloth. At Goa the people observing that his shoes were patched or worn out, offered him new: but such was his mortification, that he could not be persuaded "ut veteres calceos permutaret novis," &c. Here we have Milton's "calcei fenestrati." Among his many pretended miracles, it is one, that during this extraordinary progress, he preached to the lions and other beasts of the wilderness. But an unknown correspondent has thrown new light on the whole of the context. "The passage has properly nothing to do with the Jesuit S. Francis Xavier. The 'fenestrati calcei' are the sandals, or soles, tied on the foot by straps, or thongs of leather, crossed, or lattice-wise, which are usually worn by the Franciscan friars."—T. WARTON.

Et quid Apostolicæ possit custodia clavis;
Et memor Hesperiæ disjectam ulciscere classem,
Mersaque Iberorum lato vexilla profundo,
Sanctorumque cruci tot corpora fixa probrosæ,
Thermodoontëa nuper regnante puella [n].
At tu si tenero mavis torpescere lecto,
Crescentesque negas hosti contundere vires;
Tyrrhenum implebit numeroso milite pontum,
Signaque Aventino ponet fulgentia colle:
Relliquias veterum franget, flammisque cremabit;
Sacraque calcabit pedibus tua colla profanis,
Cujus gaudebant soleis dare basia reges.
Nec tamen hunc bellis et aperto Marte lacesses;
Irritus ille labor: tu callidus utere fraude:
Quælibet hæreticis disponere retia fas est.
Jamque ad consilium extremis rex magnus ab oris
Patricios vocat, et procerum de stirpe creatos,
Grandævosque patres, trabea canisque verendos;
Hos tu membratim poteris conspergere in auras,
Atque dare in cineres, nitrati pulveris igne
Ædibus injecto, qua convenere, sub imis.
Protinus ipse igitur, quoscunque habet Anglia fidos,
Propositi, factique, mone: quisquamne tuorum
Audebit summi non jussa facessere Papæ?
Perculsosque metu subito, casuque stupentes,
Invadat vel Gallus atrox, vel sævus Iberus.
Sæcula sic illic tandem Mariana redibunt [o],
Tuque in belligeros iterum dominaberis Anglos.
Et, nequid timeas, divos divasque secundas
Accipe, quotque tuis celebrantur numina fastis."
Dixit; et, adscitos ponens malefidos amictus,
Fugit ad infandam, regnum illætabile, Lethen.
  Jam rosea Eoas pandens Tithonia portas
Vestit inauratas redeunti lumine terras;
Mœstaque, adhuc nigri deplorans funera nati,
Irrigat ambrosiis montana cacumina guttis;
Cum somnos pepulit stellatæ janitor aulæ,
Nocturnos visus et somnia grata revolvens.
  Est locus æterna septus caligine noctis,
Vasta ruinosi quondam fundamina tecti,
Nunc torvi spelunca Phoni, Prodotæque bilinguis,
Effera quos uno peperit Discordia partu.
Hic inter cæmenta jacent, præruptaque saxa,
Ossa inhumata virum, et trajecta cadavera ferro;

[n] *Thermodoontëa nuper regnante puella.*

The Amazon, Queen Elizabeth. She is admirably characterised:—"Audetque viris concurrere virgo." Ovid has "Thermodontiacus," Metam. ix. 189; and see ibid. xii. 611.—T. Warton.

[o] The times of Queen Mary, when Popery was restored.—T. Warton.

Hic Dolus intortis semper sedet ater ocellis,
Jurgiaque, et stimulis armata Calumnia fauces,
Et Furor, atque viæ moriendi mille videntur,
Et Timor, exsanguisque locum circumvolat Horror;
Perpetuoque leves per muta silentia Manes
Exululant, tellus et sanguine conscia stagnat.
Ipsi etiam pavidi latitant penetralibus antri
Et Phonos, et Prodotes; nulloque sequente per antrum,
Antrum horrens, scopulosum, atrum feralibus umbris,
Diffugiunt [p] sontes, et retro lumina vortunt:
Hos pugiles Romæ per sæcula longa fideles
Evocat antistes Babylonius [q], atque ita fatur:—
"Finibus occiduis circumfusum incolit æquor
Gens exosa mihi: prudens Natura negavit
Indignam penitus nostro conjungere mundo:
Illuc, sic jubeo, celeri contendite gressu,
Tartareoque leves difflentur pulvere in auras
Et rex et pariter satrapæ, scelerata propago:
Et, quotquot fidei caluere cupidine veræ,
Consilii socios adhibete, operisque ministros."
Finierat; rigidi cupide paruere gemelli.
Interea longo flectens curvamine cœlos
Despicit ætherea Dominus qui fulgurat arce,
Vanaque perversæ ridet conamina turbæ;
Atque sui causam populi volet ipse tueri.
Esse ferunt spatium, qua distat ab Aside terra
Fertilis Europe, et spectat Mareotidas undas [r]
Hic turris posita est Titanidos [s] ardua Famæ;
Ærea, lata, sonans, rutilis vicinior astris
Quam superimpositum vel Athos vel Pelion Ossæ.
Mille fores aditusque patent, totidemque fenestræ,
Amplaque per tenues translucent atria muros:
Excitat hic varios plebs agglomerata susurros;
Qualiter instrepitant circum mulctralia bombis
Agmina muscarum, aut texto per ovilia junco,
Dum Canis æstivum cœli petit ardua culmen.
Ipsa quidem summa sedet ultrix matris in arce;
Auribus innumeris cinctum caput eminet olli,

[p] *Diffugiunt.*

There is great poetry and strength of imagination in supposing that Murder and Treason often fly as alarmed from the inmost recesses of their own horrid cavern, looking back, and thinking themselves pursued.—T. WARTON.

[q] *Evocat antistes Babylonius, &c.*

The Pope, the "whore of Babylon."—T. WARTON.

[r] *Mareotidas undas.*

Mareotis is a large lake in Egypt, connected by many small channels with the Nile.—T. WARTON.

[s] *Titanidos.*

Ovid has "Titanida Circen," Met. xiv. 376. Fame is the sister of Cacus and Enceladus, two of the Titans, Æn. iv. 179.—T. WARTON.

Queis sonitum exiguum trahit, atque levissima captat
Murmura, ab extremis patuli confinibus orbis.
Nec tot, Aristoride, servator inique juvencæ
Isidos, immiti volvebas lumina vultu,
Lumina non unquam tacito nutantia somno,
Lumina subjectas late spectantia terras.
Istis illa solet loca luce carentia sæpe
Perlustrare, etiam radianti impervia soli:
Millenisque loquax auditaque visaque linguis
Cuilibet effundit temeraria; veraque mendax
Nunc minuit, modo confictis sermonibus auget.
Sed tamen a nostro meruisti carmine laudes,
Fama, bonum quo non aliud veracius ullum,
Nobis digna cani, nec te memorasse pigebit
Carmine tam longo; servati scilicet Angli
Officiis, vaga diva, tuis, tibi reddimus æqua.
Te Deus, æternos motu qui temperat ignes,
Fulmine præmisso alloquitur, terraque tremente:
"Fama, siles? An te latet impia Papistarum
Conjurata cohors in meque meosque Britannos,
Et nova sceptrigero cædes meditata Iäcobo?"
Nec plura; illa statim sensit mandata Tonantis,
Et, satis ante fugax, stridentes induit alas,
Induit et variis exilia corpora plumis:
Dextra tubam gestat Temesæo ex ære sonoram[1]
Nec mora: jam pennis cedentes remigat auras,
Atque parum est cursu celeres prævertere nubes:
Jam ventos, jam solis equos, post terga reliquit:
Et primo Angliacas, solito de more, per urbes
Ambiguas voces, incertaque murmura, spargit:
Mox arguta dolos, et detestabile vulgat
Proditionis opus, necnon facta horrida dictu,
Auctoresque addit sceleris, nec garrula cæcis
Insidiis loca structa silet; stupuere relatis
Et pariter juvenes, pariter tremuere puellæ,
Effœtique senes pariter; tantæque ruinæ
Sensus ad ætatem subito penetraverat omnem.
Attamen interea populi miserescit ab alto
Æthereus Pater, et crudelibus obstitit ausis
Papicolum: capti pœnas raptantur ad acres;
At pia thura Deo, et grati solvuntur honores;
Compita læta focis genialibus omnia fumant;
Turba choros juvenilis agit: Quintoque Novembris
Nulla dies toto occurrit celebratior anno.

[1] *Dextra tubam gestat Temesæo ex ære sonoram.*

Temese is a city on the coast of the Tyrrhene sea, famous for its brass.—T. WARTON.

IN OBITUM PRÆSULIS ELIENSIS [u].

ANNO ÆTATIS 17.

Adhuc madentes rore squalebant genæ,
  Et sicca nondum lumina
Adhuc liquentis imbre turgebant salis,
  Quem nuper effudi pius,
Dum mœsta caro justa persolvi rogo
  Wintoniensis Præsulis;
Cum centilinguis Fama, pro! semper mali
  Cladisque vera nuntia,
Spargit per urbes divitis Britanniæ,
  Populosque Neptuno satos,
Cessisse morti, et ferreis sororibus,
  Te, generis humani decus,
Qui rex sacrorum illa fuisti in insula
  Quæ nomen Anguillæ tenet [v].
Tunc inquietum pectus ira protinus
  Ebulliebat fervida,
Tumulis potentem sæpe devovens deam:
  Nec vota Naso in Ibida
Concepit alto diriora pectore;
  Graiusque vates [w] parcius
Turpem Lycambis execratus est dolum,
  Sponsamque Neobulen suam.
At, ecce! diras ipse dum fundo graves,
  Et imprecor neci necem,
Audisse tales videor attonitus sonos
  Leni, sub aura, flamine:
"Cæcos furores pone; pone vitream
  Bilemque, et irritas minas:
Quid temere violas non nocenda numina,
  Subitoque ad iras percita?
Non est, ut arbitraris elusus miser,
  Mors atra Noctis filia,
Erebove patre creta, sive Erinnye,
  Vastove nata sub Chao:
Ast illa, cœlo missa stellato, Dei
  Messes ubique colligit;
Animasque more carnea reconditas
  In lucem et auras evocat:

[u] Nicholas Felton, Bishop of Ely, died October 5, 1626, not many days after Bishop Andrewes, before celebrated: he had been also master of Pembroke-hall, as well as Bishop Andrewes; and Bishop of Bristol: he was nominated to the see of Lichfield, but was translated to that of Ely in 1618–19. He is said to have been a pious, learned, and judicious man.—Todd.

[v] *Quæ nomen Anguillæ tenet.*

Ely, so called from its abundance of eels.—T. Warton.

[w] Archilochus, who killed Lycambes by the severity of his iambics. Lycambes had espoused his daughter Neobule to Archilochus, and afterwards gave her to another.—T. Warton.

Ut cum fugaces excitant Horæ diem,
  Themidos Jovisque filiæ;
Et sempiterni ducit ad vultus Patris:
  At justa raptat impios
Sub regna furvi luctuosa Tartari,
  Sedesque subterraneas."
Hanc ut vocantem lætus audivi, cito
  Fœdum reliqui carcerem,
Volatilesque faustus inter milites
  Ad astra sublimis feror;
Vates ut olim raptus ad cœlum senex,
  Auriga currus ignei.
Non me Boötis terruere lucidi
  Sarraca tarda frigore, aut
Formidolosi Scorpionis brachia;
  Non ensis, Orion, tuus.
Prætervolavi fulgidi solis globum,
  Longeque sub pedibus deam
Vidi triformem, dum coërcebat suos
  Frænis dracones aureis.
Erraticorum siderum per ordines,
  Per lacteas vehor plagas,
Velocitatem sæpe miratus novam;
  Donec nitentes ad fores
Ventum est Olympi, et regiam crystallinam, et
  Stratum smaragdis atrium.
Sed hic tacebo; nam quis effari queat,
  Oriundus humano patre,
Amœnitates illius loci? Mihi
  Sat est in æternum frui.

NATURAM NON PATI SENIUM[x].

Heu, quam perpetuis erroribus acta fatiscit
Avia mens hominum, tenebris immersa profundis
Œdipodioniam volvit sub pectore noctem!
Quæ vesana suis metiri facta deorum
Audet, et incisas leges adamante perenni
Assimilare suis, nulloque solubile sæclo
Consilium fati perituris alligat horis!
  Ergone marcescet sulcantibus obsita rugis
Naturæ facies, et rerum publica mater
Omniparum contracta uterum sterilescet ab ævo?
Et, se fassa senem, male certis passibus ibit
Sidereum tremebunda caput? Num tetra vetustas,
Annorumque æterna fames, squalorque, situsque,

[x] This was an academical exercise, written in 1628, to oblige one of the fellows of Christ's College, who, having laid aside the levities of poetry for the gravity and solidity of prose, imposed the boyish task on Milton, now about nineteen years old.—T. Warton.

Sidera vexabunt? An et insatiabile Tempus
Esuriet cœlum, rapietque in viscera patrem?
Heu, potuitne suas imprudens Jupiter arces
Hoc contra munisse nefas, et Temporis isto
Exemisse malo, gyrosque dedisse perennes?
Ergo erit ut quandoque sono dilapsa tremendo
Convexi tabulata ruant, atque obvius ictu
Stridat uterque polus, superaque ut Olympius aula
Decidat, horribilisque retecta Gorgone Pallas;
Qualis in Ægæam proles Junonia Lemnon
Deturbata sacro cecidit de limine cœli?
Tu quoque, Phœbe, tui casus imitabere nati;
Præcipiti curru, subitaque ferere ruina
Pronus, et extincta fumabit lampade Nereus,
Et dabit attonito feralia sibila ponto.
Tunc etiam aërei divulsis sedibus Hæmi
Dissultabit apex, imoque allisa barathro
Terrebunt Stygium dejecta Ceraunia Ditem,
In superos quibus usus erat, fraternaque bella.
At Pater Omnipotens, fundatis fortius astris,
Consuluit rerum summæ, certoque peregit
Pondere fatorum lances, atque ordine summo
Singula perpetuum jussit servare tenorem.
Volvitur hinc lapsu mundi rota prima diurno;
Raptat et ambitos socia vertigine cœlos.
Tardior haud solito Saturnus, et acer ut olim
Fulmineum rutilat cristata casside Mavors.
Floridus æternum Phœbus juvenile coruscat,
Nec fovet effœtas loca per declivia terras
Devexo temone deus; sed semper amica
Luce potens, eadem currit per signa rotarum.
Surgit odoratis pariter formosus ab Indis,
Æthereum pecus albenti qui cogit Olympo,
Mane vocans, et serus agens in pascua cœli;
Temporis et gemino dispertit regna colore.
Fulget, obitque vices alterno Delia cornu,
Cæruleumque ignem paribus complectitur ulnis.
Nec variant elementa fidem, solitoque fragore
Lurida perculsas jaculantur fulmina rupes:
Nec per inane furit leviori murmure Corus,
Stringit et armiferos æquali horrore Gelonos
Trux Aquilo, spiratque hyemem, nimbosque volutat.
Utque solet, Siculi diverberat ima Pelori
Rex maris, et rauca circumstrepit æquora concha
Oceani tubicen, nec vesta mole minorem
Ægæona ferunt dorso Balearica cete.
Sed, neque, Terra, tibi sæcli vigor ille vetusti
Priscus abest, servatque suum Narcissus odorem,
Et puer ille suum tenet, et puer ille, decorem,

Phœbe, tuusque, et, Cypri, tuus[y]; nec ditior olim
Terra datum sceleri celavit montibus aurum
Conscia, vel sub aquis gemmas. Sic denique in ævum
Ibit cunctarum series justissima rerum;
Donec flamma orbem populabitur ultima, late
Circumplexa polos, et vasti culmina cœli;
Ingentique rogo flagrabit machina mundi.

DE IDEA PLATONICA QUEMADMODUM ARISTOTELES INTELLEXIT[z].

Dicite, sacrorum præsides nemorum deæ;
Tuque, O, noveni perbeata numinis
Memoria mater, quæque in immenso procul
Antro recumbis, otiosa Æternitas,
Monumenta servans, et ratas leges Jovis,
Cœlique fastos, atque ephemeridas deum;
Quis ille primus, cujus ex imagine
Natura solers finxit humanum genus,
Æternus, incorruptus, æquævus polo,
Unusque et universus, exemplar Dei?
Haud ille Palladis gemellus innubæ[a]
Interna proles insidet menti Jovis;
Sed quamlibet natura sit communior,
Tamen seorsus extat ad morem unius,
Et, mira, certo stringitur spatio loci:
Seu sempiternus ille siderum comes
Cœli pererrat ordines decemplicis,
Citimumve terris incolit lunæ globum:
Sive, inter animas corpus adituras sedens,
Obliviosas torpet ad Lethes aquas:
Sive in remota forte terrarum plaga
Incedit ingens hominis archetypus gigas,
Et diis tremendus erigit celsum caput,
Atlante major portitore siderum.
Non, cui profundum cæcitas lumen dedit[b],
Dircæus augur vidit hunc alto sinu;

[y] Hyacinth the favourite boy of Phœbus, Adonis of Venus: both, like Narcissus, converted into flowers.—T. Warton.

This poem is replete with fanciful and ingenious allusions: it has also a vigour of expression, a dignity of sentiment, and elevation of thought, rarely found in very young writers.—T. Warton.

[z] I find this poem inserted, at full length, as a specimen of unintelligible metaphysics, in a scarce little book of universal burlesque, much in the manner of Tom Brown, seemingly published about the year 1715, and entitled "An Essay towards the Theory of the intelligible world intuitively considered."—T. Warton.

[a] *Haud ille Palladis gemellus innubæ, &c.*

"This aboriginal man, the twin-brother of the virgin Pallas, does not remain in the brain of Jupiter where he was generated; but, although partaking of man's common nature, still exists somewhere by himself, in a case of singleness and abstraction, and in a determinate place. Whether among the stars," &c.—T. Warton.

[b] Tiresias of Thebes.—T. Warton.

Non hunc silente nocte Plëiones nepos[c]
Vatum sagaci præpes ostendit choro;
Non hunc sacerdos novit Assyrius[d], licet
Longos vetusti commemoret atavos Nini,
Priscumque Belon, inclytumque Osiridem;
Non ille, trino gloriosus nomine,
Ter magnus Hermes[e], ut sit arcani sciens,
Talem reliquit Isidis cultoribus.
At tu, perenne ruris Academi decus[f]
(Hæc monstra si tu primus induxti scholis),
Jam jam poetas, urbis exules tuæ,
Revocabis, ipse fabulator maximus;
Aut institutor ipse migrabis foras.

AD PATREM[g].

Nunc mea Pierios cupiam per pectora fontes
Irriguas torquere vias, totumque per ora
Volvere laxatum gemino de vertice rivum;
Ut, tenues oblita sonos, audacibus alis
Surgat in officium venerandi Musa parentis.
Hoc utcunque tibi gratum, pater optime, carmen
Exiguum meditatur opus; nec novimus ipsi
Aptius a nobis qua possint munera donis
Respondere tuis, quamvis nec maxima possint
Respondere tuis, nedum ut par gratia donis
Esse queat, vacuis quæ redditur arida verbis.
Sed tamen hæc nostros ostendit pagina census,
Et quod habemus opum charta numeravimus ista,
Quæ mihi sunt nullæ, nisi quas dedit aurea Clio,
Quas mihi semoto somni peperere sub antro,
Et nemoris laureta sacri Parnassides umbræ.
Nec tu vatis opus divinum despice carmen,

[c] *Plëiones nepos.*

Mercury.—T. Warton.

[d] *Non hunc sacerdos novit Assyrius.*

Sanchoniathon, the eldest of the profane historians.—T. Warton.

[e] *Trino gloriosus nomine,*
Ter magnus Hermes.

Hermes Trismegistus, an Egyptian philosopher, who lived soon after Moses, as Mr. Warton observes: "Thrice-great Hermes,"—'Il Pens.' v. 88. Suidas says he was so called because he was a philosopher, a priest, and a king.—Todd.

[f] *At tu, perenne ruris Academi decus, &c.*

"You, Plato, who expelled the poets from your republic, must now bid them return," &c. Plato and his followers communicated their notions by emblems, fables, symbols, parables, allegories, and a variety of mystical representations.—T. Warton.

[g] According to Aubrey's manuscript "Life of Milton," Milton's father, although a scrivener, was not apprenticed to that trade; he says he was bred a scholar, and of Christ-church, Oxford, and that he took to trade in consequence of being disinherited: Milton was therefore writing to his father in a language which he understood. Aubrey adds, that he was very ingenious, and delighted in music, in which he instructed his son John: that he died about 1647, and was interred in Cripplegate church, from his house in Barbican.—T. Warton.

Quo nihil æthereos ortus, et semina cœli,
Nil magis humanam commendat origine mentem,
Sancta Promethëæ retinens vestigia flammæ.
Carmen amant superi, tremebundaque Tartara carmen
Ima ciere valet, divosque ligare profundos,
Et triplici duro Manes adamante coercet.
Carmine sepositi retegunt arcana futuri
Phœbades[h], et tremulæ pallentes ora Sibyllæ:
Carmina sacrificus sollennes pangit ad aras;
Aurea seu sternit motantem cornua taurum:
Seu cum fata sagax fumantibus abdita fibris
Consulit, et tepidis Parcam scrutatur in extis.
Nos etiam, patrium tunc cum repetemus Olympum,
Æternæque moræ stabunt immobilis ævi,
Ibimus auratis per cœli templa coronis;
Dulcia suaviloquo sociantes carmina plectro,
Astra quibus, geminique poli convexa, sonabunt.
Spiritus et rapidos qui circinat igneus orbes,
Nunc quoque sidereis intercinit ipse choreis
Immortale melos, et inenarrabile carmen;
Torrida dum rutilus compescit sibila Serpens,
Demissoque ferox gladio mansuescit Orion;
Stellarum nec sentit onus Maurusius Atlas.
Carmina regales epulas ornare solebant,
Cum nondum luxus, vastæque immensa vorago
Nota gulæ, et modico spumabat cœna Lyæo,
Tum, de more sedens festa ad convivia vates,
Æsculea intonsos redimitus ab arbore crines,
Heroumque actus, imitandaque gesta canebat,
Et chaos, et positi late fundamina mundi,
Reptantesque deos, et alentes numina glandes,
Et nondum Ætnæo quæsitum fulmen ab antro.
Denique quid vocis modulamen inane juvabit,
Verborum sensusque vacans, numerique loquacis?
Silvestres decet iste choros, non Orphea, cantus,
Qui tenuit fluvios, et quercubus addidit aures,
Carmine, non cithara; simulacraque functa canendo
Compulit in lacrymas: habet has a carmine laudes.
Nec tu perge, precor, sacras contemnere Musas,
Nec vanas inopesque puta, quarum ipse peritus
Munere mille sonos numeros componis ad aptos;
Millibus et vocem modulis variare canoram
Doctus, Arionii merito sis nominis hæres.
Nunc tibi quid mirum, si me genuisse poetam

[h] *Phœbades.*

The priestesses of Apollo's temple at Delphi, who always delivered their oracles in verse.—T. Warton.

Such predictions of true genius, with a natural and noble consciousness anticipating its own immortality, are seldom found to fail.—T. Warton.

Contigerit, caro si tam prope sanguine juncti
Cognatas artes, studiumque affine, sequamur?
Ipse volens Phœbus se dispertire duobus,
Altera dona mihi, dedit altera dona parenti;
Dividuumque deum, genitorque puerque, tenemus.
Tu tamen ut simules teneras odisse Camœnas,
Non odisse reor; neque enim, pater, ire jubebas
Qua via lata patet, qua pronior area lucri,
Certaque condendi fulgit spes aurea nummi:
Nec rapis ad leges, male custoditaque gentis
Jura, nec insulsis damnas clamoribus aures;
Sed, magis excultam cupiens ditescere mentem,
Me procul urbano strepitu, secessibus altis
Abductum, Aöniæ jucunda per otia ripæ,
Phœbæo lateri comitem sinis ire beatum.
Officium cari taceo commune parentis;
Me poscunt majora: tuo, pater optime, sumtu,
Cum mihi Romuleæ patuit facundia linguæ,
Et Latii veneres, et quæ Jovis ora decebant
Grandia magniloquis elata vocabula Graiis,
Addere suasisti quos jactat Gallia flores;
Et quam degeneri novus Italus ore loquelam
Fundit, barbaricos testatus voce tumultus;
Quæque Palæstinus loquitur mysteria vates.
Denique quicquid habet cœlum, subjectaque cœlo
Terra parens, terræque et cœlo interfluus aer,
Quicquid et unda tegit, pontique agitabile marmor,
Per te nosse licet, per te, si nosse libebit:
Dimotaque venit spectanda scientia nube,
Nudaque conspicuos inclinat ad oscula vultus,
Ni fugisse velim, ni sit libasse molestum.
I nunc, confer opes, quisquis malesanus avitas
Austriaci gazas, Perüanaque regna, præoptas.
Quæ potuit majora pater tribuisse, vel ipse
Jupiter, excepto, donasset ut omnia, cœlo?
Non potiora dedit, quamvis et tuta fuissent,
Publica qui juveni commisit lumina nato,
Atque Hyperionios currus, et fræna diei,
Et circum undantem radiata luce tiaram.
Ergo ego, jam doctæ pars quamlibet ima catervæ,
Victrices hederas inter laurosque sedebo;
Jamque nec obscurus populo miscebor inerti,
Vitabuntque oculos vestigia nostra profanos.
Est procul, vigiles curæ; procul este, querelæ;
Invidiæque acies transverso tortilis hirquo;
Sæva nec anguiferos extende, calumnia, rictus:
In me triste nihil, fœdissima turba, potestis,
Nec vestri sum juris ego; securaque tutus
Pectora, vipereo gradiar sublimis ab ictu.

At tibi, care pater, postquam non æqua merenti
Posse referre datur, nec dona rependere factis,
Sit memorasse satis, repetitaque munera grato
Percensere animo, fidæque reponere menti.
Et vos, O nostri, juvenilia carmina, lusus,
Si modo perpetuos sperare audebitis annos,
Et domini superesse rogo, lucemque tueri,
Nec spisso rapient oblivia nigra sub Orco;
Forsitan has laudes, decantatumque parentis
Nomen, ad exemplum, sero servabitis ævo.

AD SALSILLUM, POETAM ROMANUM, ÆGROTANTEM[i].

SCAZONTES.

O MUSA, gressum quæ volens trahis claudum,
Vulcanioque tarda gaudes incessu,
Nec sentis illud in loco minus gratum,
Quam cum decentes flava Dëiope[j] suras
Alternat aureum ante Junonis lectum;
Adesdum, et hæc s'is verba pauca Salsillo
Refer, Camœna nostra cui tantum est cordi,
Quamque ille magnis prætulit immerito divis.
Hæc ergo alumnus ille Londini Milto,
Diebus hisce qui suum linquens nidum,
Polique tractum, pessimus ubi ventorum,
Insanientis impotensque pulmonis,
Pernix anhela sub Jove exercet flabra,
Venit feraces Itali soli ad glebas,
Visum superba, cognitas urbes fama,
Virosque, doctæque indolem juventutis.
Tibi optat idem hic fausta multa, Salsille,
Habitumque fesso corpori penitus sanum;
Cui nunc profunda bilis infestat renes,
Præcordiisque fixa damnosum spirat;
Nec id pepercit impia, quod tu Romano
Tam cultus ore Lesbium condis melos.
O dulce divum munus[k], O Salus, Hebes
Germana! Tuque, Phœbe, morborum terror,
Pythone cæso, sive tu magis Pæan
Libenter audis, hic tuus sacerdos est.
Querceta Fauni, vosque rore vinoso
Colles benigni, mitis Evandri sedes,

[i] Giovanni Salsilli had complimented Milton at Rome in a Latin tetrastich, for his Greek, Latin, and Italian poetry: Milton, in return, sent these elegant Scazontes to Salsilli when indisposed.—T. WARTON.

[j] *Quam cum decentes flava Dëiope, &c.*

As the Muses sung about the altar of Jupiter, in 'Il Penseroso,' v. 47.—T. WARTON.

[k] *O dulce divum munus, &c.*

I know not any finer modern Latin lyric poetry, than from this verse to the end. The close, which is digressional, but naturally rises from the subject, is perfectly antique.—T. WARTON.

Siquid salubre vallibus frondet vestris,
Levamen ægro ferte certatim vati.
Sic ille, caris redditus rursum Musis,
Vicina dulci prata mulcebit cantu.
Ipse inter atros emirabitur lucos
Numa, ubi beatum degit otium æternum,
Suam reclivis semper Ægeriam spectans.
Tumidusque et ipse Tibris, hinc delinitus,
Spei favebit annuæ colonorum;
Nec in sepulcris ibit obsessum reges,
Nimium sinistro laxus irruens loro;
Sed fræna melius temperabit undarum,
Adusque curvi salsa regna Portumni.

MANSUS[l].

Joannes Baptista Mansus, Marchio Villensis, vir ingenii laude, tum literarum studio, necnon et bellica virtute, apud Italos clarus in primus est; ad quem Torquati Tassi Dialogus extat de Amicitia scriptus; erat enim Tassi amicissimus; ab quo etiam inter Campaniæ principes celebratur, in illo poemate cui titulus 'Gerusalemme Conquistata,' lib. 20.

Fra cavalier magnanimi, è cortesi
Risplende il Manso.

Is auctorem Neapoli commorantem summa benevolentia prosecutus est, multaque ei detulit humanitatis officia: ad hunc itaque hospes ille, antequam ab ea urbe discederet, ut ne ingratum se ostenderet, hoc carmen misit:—

Hæc quoque, Manse, tuæ meditantur carmina laudi
Pierides, tibi, Manse, choro notissime Phœbi;
Quandoquidem ille alium haud æquo est dignatus honore,
Post Galli cineres, et Mecænatis Hetrusci.
Tu quoque, si nostræ tantum valet aura Camœnæ,
Victrices hederas inter laurosque sedebis.
Te pridem magno felix concordia Tasso
Junxit, et æternis inscripsit nomina chartis:
Mox tibi dulciloquum non inscia Musa Marinum
Tradidit; ille tuum dici se gaudet alumnum[m],
Dum canit[n] Assyrios divum prolixus amores;
Mollis et Ausonias stupefecit carmine nymphas.

[l] At Naples Milton was introduced to Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, and at leaving Naples sent him this poem. He was a nobleman of distinguished rank and fortune, had supported a military character with high reputation, of unblemished morals, a polite scholar, a celebrated writer, and a universal patron. It was among his chief honours, that he had been the friend of Tasso: and this circumstance, above all others, must have made Milton ambitious of his acquaintance. He is not only complimented by name in the twentieth canto of the "Gerusalemme," but Tasso addressed his "Dialogue on Friendship" to Manso. He died in 1645, aged eighty-four.— T. Warton.

[m] *Ille tuum dici se gaudet alumnum.*

Marino cultivated poetry in the academy of the Otiosi, of which Manso was one of the founders. Hither he was sent by the Muse, who was "non inscia," not ignorant of his poetical abilities and inclinations, &c., for at first, against his will, his father had put him to the law.—T. Warton.

[n] *Dum canit, &c.*

The allusion is to Marino's poem "Il Adone."—T. Warton.

Ille itidem moriens tibi soli debita vates
Ossa, tibi soli, supremaque vota reliquit:
Nec Manes pietas tua cara fefellit amici:
Vidimus arridentem operoso ex ære poetam [o].
Nec satis hoc visum est in utrumque, et nec pia cessant
Officia in tumulo; cupis integros rapere Orco,
Qua potes, atque avidas Parcarum eludere leges;
Amborum genus, et varia sub sorte peractam
Describis vitam, moresque, et dona Minervæ;
Æmulus illius, Mycalen qui natus ad altam
Rettulit Æolii vitam facundus Homeri [p].
Ergo ego te, Clius et magni nomine Phœbi,
Manse pater, jubeo longum salvere per ævum,
Missus Hyperboreo juvenis peregrinus ab axe.
Nec tu longinquam bonus aspernabere Musam,
Quæ nuper gelida vix enutrita sub Arcto,
Imprudens Italas ausa est volitare per urbes.
Nos etiam in nostro modulantes flumine cygnos
Credimus obscuras noctis sensisse per umbras,
Qua Thamesis [q] late puris argenteus urnis
Oceani glaucos perfundit gurgite crines:
Quin et in has quondam pervenit Tityrus oras [r].
  Sed neque nos genus incultum, nec inutile Phœbo,
Qua plaga septeno mundi sulcata Trione
Brumalem patitur longa sub nocte Boöten.
Nos etiam colimus Phœbum, nos munera Phœbo
Flaventes spicas, et lutea mala canistris,
Halantemque crocum, perhibet nisi vana vetustas,
Misimus, et lectas Druidum de gente choreas.
Gens Druides antiqua, sacris operata deorum,
Heroum laudes, imitandaque gesta, canebant;
Hinc quoties festo cingunt altaria cantu,
Delo in herbosa, Graiæ de more puellæ,

[o] *Vidimus arridentem operoso ex ære poetam.*

Marino's monument at Naples, erected by Manso. Marino died at Naples in 1625, aged fifty-six.—T. Warton.

[p] *Mycalen qui natus ad altam*
Rettulit Æolii vitam facundus Homeri.

Plutarch, who wrote the "Life of Homer." He was a native of Bœotia, where Mycale is a mountain.—T. Warton.

The learned translator of this poem into English verse, the Rev. Joseph Stirling, observes that Herodotus is here intended; and that Mr. Warton is mistaken in supposing Milton to allude to Plutarch: for, he adds, "a mountain of the name of Mycale in Bœotia will not be found either in Pausanias or Strabo: Mycale was in Asia Minor, the country of Herodotus. The epithet 'facundus,' which Mr. Warton admires, is particularly applicable to the father of history; but I doubt whether it would be allowed to Plutarch on the banks of the Ilissus, though he is rich in biographical and moral reflections."—Todd.

[q] *Qua Thamesis, &c.*

Spenser.—Hurd.

[r] *Quin et in has quondam pervenit Tityrus oras.*

"Like me, too, Chaucer travelled into Italy." In Spenser's "Pastorals," Chaucer is constantly called Tityrus.—T. Warton.

Carminibus lætis memorant Corineida Loxo [s],
Fatidicamque Upin, cum flavicoma Hecaërge,
Nuda Caledonio variatas pectora fuco.
Fortunate senex, ergo, quacunque per orbem
Torquati decus, et nomen celebrabitur ingens,
Claraque perpetui succrescet fama Marini:
Tu quoque in ora frequens venies, plausumque virorum,
Et parili carpes iter immortale volatu.
Dicetur tum sponte tuos habitasse penates
Cynthius, et famulas venisse ad limina Musas:
At non sponte domum tamen idem [t], et regis adivit
Rura Pheretiadæ, cœlo fugitivus Apollo;
Ille licet magnum Alciden susceperat hospes:
Tantum ubi clamosos placuit vitare bubulcos,
Nobile mansueti cessit Chironis in antrum,
Irriguos inter saltus, frondosaque tecta,
Peneium prope rivum: ibi sæpe sub ilice nigra,
Ad citharæ strepitum, blanda prece victus amici,
Exilii duros lenibat voce labores.
Tum neque ripa suo, barathro nec fixa sub imo
Saxa stetere loco; nutat Trachinia rupes,
Nec sentit solitas, immania pondera, silvas;
Emotæque suis properant de collibus orni,
Mulcenturque novo maculosi carmine lynces.
Dis dilecte senex, te Jupiter æquus oportet
Nascentem, et miti lustrarit lumine Phœbus.
Atlantisque nepos; neque enim, nisi carus ab ortu
Dis superis, poterit magno favisse poetæ.
Hinc longæva tibi lento sub flore senectus
Vernat, et Æsonios lucratur vivida fusos;
Nondum deciduos servans tibi frontis honores,
Ingeniumque vigens, et adultum mentis acumen.
O, mihi si mea sors talem concedat amicum,
Phœbæos decorasse viros qui tam bene norit,
Siquando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges [u]
Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem!
Aut dicam invictæ sociali fœdere mensæ [v]
Magnanimos heroas; et, O, modo spiritus adsit,
Frangam Saxonicas Britonum sub Marte phalanges!

[s] Our author converts the three Hyperborean nymphs, who sent fruits to Apollo in Delos, into British goddesses.—T. Warton.

[t] *At non sponte domum tamen idem, &c.*

Apollo, being driven from heaven, kept the cattle of King Admetus in Thessaly, who had entertained Hercules: this was in the neighbourhood of the river Peneus, and of mount Pelion, inhabited by Chiron.—T. Warton.

[u] *Siquando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges, &c.*

The "Indigenæ reges" are the ancient kings of Britain.—T. Warton.

[v] *Sociali fœdere mensæ, &c.*

The knights, or associated champions, of King Arthur's round table, as Mr. Warton observes.—Todd.

Tandem ubi non tacitæ permensus tempora vitæ,
Annorumque satur, cineri sua jura relinquam,
Ille mihi lecto madidis astaret ocellis;
Astanti sat erit si dicam, sim tibi curæ;
Ille meos artus, liventi morte solutos,
Curaret parva componi molliter urna:
Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus,
Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri
Fronde comas; at ego secura pace quiescam.
Tum quoque, si qua fides, si præmia certa bonorum,
Ipse ego cœlicolum semotus in æthera divum,
Quo labor et mens pura vehunt, atque ignea virtus,
Secreti hæc aliqua mundi de parte videbo,
Quantum fata sinunt; et, tota mente serenum
Ridens, purpureo suffundar lumine vultus,
Et simul æthereo plaudam mihi lætus Olympo.

EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS [w].

ARGUMENTUM.

Thyrsis et Damon, ejusdem viciniæ pastores, eadem studia secuti, a pueritia amici erant, ut qui plurimum. Thyrsis animi causa profectus peregre de obitu Damonis nuncium accepit. Demum postea reversus, et rem ita esse comperto, se, suamque solitudinem hoc carmine deplorat. Damonis autem sub persona hic intelligitur Carolus Deodatus, ex urbe Hetruriæ Luca paterno genere oriundus, cætera Anglus; ingenio, doctrina, clarissimisque cæteris virtutibus, dum viveret, juvenis egregius.

Himerides nymphæ [x] (nam vos et Daphnin, et Hylan,
Et plorata diu meministis fata Bionis),
Dicite Sicelicum Thamesina per oppida carmen;
Quas miser effudit voces, quæ murmura Thyrsis,
Et quibus assiduis exercuit antra querelis,
Fluminaque, fontesque vagos, nemorumque recessus;
Dum sibi præreptum queritur Damona, neque altam
Luctibus exemit noctem, loca sola pererrans.
Et jam bis viridi surgebat culmus arista,
Et totidem flavas numerabant horrea messes,
Ex quo summa dies tulerat Damona sub umbras,

[w] Charles Deodate's father, Theodore, was born at Geneva, of an Italian family, in 1574. He came young into England, where he married an English lady of good birth and fortune: he was a doctor in physic; and, in 1609, appears to have been physician to Prince Henry and the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards queen of Bohemia. He lived then at Brentford, where he performed a wonderful cure by phlebotomy; as appears by his own narrative of the case, in a letter dated 1629. One of his descendants, Mons. Anton. Josuè Diodati, who has honoured me with some of these notices, is now the learned librarian of the republic of Geneva. Theodore's brother, Giovanni Deodati, was an eminent theologist of Geneva; with whom Milton, in consequence of his connexion with Charles, contracted a friendship during his abode at Geneva, and whose annotations on the Bible were translated into English by the puritans. The family left Italy on account of religion.—T. Warton.

[x] *Himerides nymphæ.*

Himera is the famous bucolic river of Theocritus, who sung the death of Daphnis, and the loss of Hylas. Bion, in the next line, was lamented by Moschus.—T. Warton.

Necdum aderat Thyrsis [y]; pastorem scilicet illum
Dulcis amor Musæ Tusca retinebat in urbe:
Ast ubi mens expleta domum, pecorisque relicti
Cura vocat, simul assueta seditque sub ulmo;
Tum vero amissum tum denique sentit amicum,
Cœpit et immensum sic exonerare dolorem:—
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Hei mihi! quæ terris, quæ dicam numina cœlo,
Postquam te immiti rapuerunt funere, Damon!
Siccine nos linquis, tua sic sine nomine virtus
Ibit, et obscuris numero sociabitur umbris?
At non ille, animas virga qui dividit aurea,
Ista velit, dignumque tui te ducat in agmen,
Ignavumque procul pecus arceat omne silentum.
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Quicquid erit, certe, nisi me lupus ante videbit,
Indeplorato non comminuere sepulcro,
Constabitque tuus tibi honos, longumque vigebit,
Inter pastores: illi tibi vota secundo
Solvere post Daphnin, post Daphnin dicere laudes,
Gaudebunt, dum rura Pales, dum Faunus amabit;
Si quid id est, priscamque fidem coluisse, piumque,
Palladiasque artes, sociumque habuisse canorum.
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Hæc tibi certa manent, tibi erunt hæc præmia, Damon;
At mihi quid tandem fiet modo? quis mihi fidus
Hærebit lateri comes, ut tu sæpe solebas
Frigoribus duris, et per loca fœta pruinis,
Aut rapido sub sole, siti morientibus herbis?
Sive opus in magnos fuit eminus ire leones,
Aut avidos terrere lupos præsepibus altis;
Quis fando sopire diem, cantuque, solebit?
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Pectora cui credam? quis me lenire docebit
Mordaces curas, quis longam fallere noctem
Dulcibus alloquiis, grato cum sibilat igni
Molle pyrum, et nucibus strepitat focus, et malus Auster
Miscet cuncta foris, et desuper intonat ulmo?
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Aut æstate, dies medio dum vertitur axe,
Cum Pan æsculea somnum capit abditus umbra,
Et repetunt sub aquis sibi nota sedilia nymphæ,
Pastoresque latent, stertit sub sepe colonus;
Quis mihi blanditiasque tuas, quis tum mihi risus,
Cecropiosque sales referet, cultosque lepores?
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
At jam solus agros, jam pascua solus oberro,

[y] Thyrsis, or Milton, was now at Florence.—T. WARTON.

Sicubi ramosæ densantur vallibus umbræ;
Hic serum expecto; supra caput imber et Eurus
Triste sonant, fractæque agitata crepuscula silvæ.
  Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Heu, quam culta mihi prius arva procacibus herbis
Involvuntur, et ipsa situ seges alta fatiscit!
Innuba neglecto marcescit et uva racemo,
Nec myrteta juvant; ovium quoque tædet; at illæ
Mœrent, inque suum convertunt ora magistrum.
  Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Tityrus ad corylos vocat, Alphesibœus ad ornos,
Ad salices Ægon, ad flumina pulcher Amyntas;
"Hic gelidi fontes, hic illita gramina musco,
Hic Zephyri, hic placidas interstrepit arbutus undas."
Ista canunt surdo; frutices ego nactus abibam.
  Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Mopsus ad hæc, nam me redeuntem forte notarat
(Et callebat avium linguas et sidera Mopsus),
"Thyrsi, quid hoc?" dixit, "quæ te coquit improba bilis?
Aut te perdit amor, aut te male fascinat astrum:
Saturni grave sæpe fuit pastoribus astrum,
Intimaque obliquo figit præcordia plumbo."
  Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Mirantur nymphæ, et, "quid te, Thyrsi, futurum est?
Quid tibi vis?" aiunt; "non hæc solet esse juventæ
Nubila frons, oculique truces, vultusque severi:
Illa choros, lususque leves, et semper amorem
Jure petit: bis ille miser quis serus amavit."
  Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Venit Hyas, Dryopeque, et filia Baucidis Ægle,
Docta modos, citharæque sciens, sed perdita fastu;
Venit Idumanii[1] Chloris vicina fluenti:
Nil me blanditiæ, nil me solantia verba,
Nil me, si quid adest, movet, aut spes ulla futuri.
  Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Hei mihi! quam similes ludunt per prata juvenci,
Omnes unanimi secum sibi lege sodales!
Nec magis hunc alio quisquam secernit amicum
De grege; sic densi veniunt ad pabula thoes,
Inque vicem hirsuti paribus junguntur onagri:
Lex eadem pelagi; deserto in littore Proteus
Agmina phocarum numerat, vilisque volucrum
Passer habet semper quicum sit, et omnia circum
Farra libans volitat, sero sua tecta revisens;
Quem si sors leto objecit, seu milvus adunco
Fota tulit rostro, seu stravit arundine fossar,

[1] The river Chelmer in Essex is called "Idumanium fluentum," near its influx into Blackwater-bay. Ptolemy calls this bay "portus Idumanius."—T. WARTON.

Protinus ille alium socio petit inde volatu.
Nos durum genus, et diris exercita fatis
Gens homines, aliena animis, et pectore discors;
Vix sibi quisque parem de millibus invenit unum;
Aut si sors dederit tandem non aspera votis,
Illum inopina dies, qua non speraveris hora,
Surripit, æternum linquens, in sæcula damnum.
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Heu quis me ignotas traxit vagus error in oras,
Ire per aëreas rupes, Alpemque nivosam!
Ecquid erat tanti Romam vidisse sepultam
(Quamvis illa foret, qualem dum viseret olim,
Tityrus ipse suas et oves et rura reliquit),
Ut te tam dulci possem caruisse sodale!
Possem tot maria alta, tot interponere montes,
Tot silvas, tot saxa tibi, fluviosque sonantes!
Ah, certe extremum licuisset tangere dextram,
Et bene compositos placide morientis ocellos,
Et dixisse, "Vale; nostri memor ibis ad astra."
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Quamquam etiam vestri nunquam meminisse pigebit,
Pastores Tusci, Musis operata juventus;
Hic Charis, atque Lepos; et Tuscus tu quoque, Damon,
Antiqua genus unde petis Lucumonis ab urbe [a].
O, ego quantus eram, gelidi cum stratus ad Arni
Murmura, populeumque nemus, qua mollior herba,
Carpere nunc violas, nunc summas carpere myrtos,
Et potui Lycidæ certantem audire Menalcam?
Ipse etiam tentare ausus sum; nec, puto, multum
Displicui; nam sunt et apud me munera vestra,
Fiscellæ, calathique, et cerea vincla cicutæ:
Quin et nostra suas docuerunt nomina fagos
Et Datis, et Francinus [b]: erant et vocibus ambo
Et studiis noti; Lydorum sanguinis ambo [c].
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Hæc mihi tum læto dictabat roscida luna,
Dum solus teneros claudebam cratibus hædos.
Ah, quoties dixi, cum te cinis ater habebat,
Nunc canit, aut lepori nunc tendit retia Damon;
Vimina nunc texit, varios sibi quod sit in usus!
Et quæ tum facili sperabam mente futura

[a] *Lucumonis ab urbe.*

Luca, Lucca, an ancient city of Tuscany, was founded by Lucumon, an Hetruscan king.—T. WARTON.

[b] *Et Datis, et Francinus.*

Carlo Dati of Florence, with whom Milton corresponded after his return to England.—T. WARTON.

[c] *Lydorum sanguinis ambo.*

Of the most ancient Tuscan families. The Lydians brought a colony into Italy, whence came the Tuscans.—T. WARTON.

Arripui voto levis, et præsentia finxi:
"Heus, bone! numquid agis? nisi te quid forte retardat,
Imus? et arguta paulum recubamus in umbra,
Aut ad aquas Colni, aut ubi jugera Cassibelauni[d]?
Tu mihi percurres medicos, tua gramina, succos[e],
Helleborumque, humilesque crocos, foliumque hyacinthi,
Quasque habet ista polus herbas, artesque medentum."
Ah, pereant herbæ, pereant artesque medentum,
Gramina, postquam ipsi nil profecere magistro!
Ipse etiam, nam nescio quid mihi grande sonabat[f]
Fistula; ab undecima jam lux est altera nocte,
Et tum forte novis admoram labra cicutis;
Dissiluere tamen rupta compage, nec ultra
Ferre graves potuere sonos: dubito quoque ne sim
Turgidulus, tamen et referam; vos, cedite, silvæ.
  Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Ipse ego Dardanias Rutupina per æquora puppes
Dicam, et Pandrasidos regnum vetus Inogeniæ,
Brennumque Arviragumque duces, priscumque Belinum,
Et tandem Armoricos Britonum sub lege colonos;
Tum gravidam Arturo, fatali fraude, Iögernen,
Mendaces vultus, assumtaque Gorlöis arma,
Merlini dolus. O, mihi tum si vita supersit,
Tu procul annosa pendebis, fistula, pinu,
Multum oblita mihi; aut patriis mutata Camœnis
Brittonicum strides; quid enim? omnia non licet uni,
Non sperasse uni licet omnia: mi satis ampla
Merces, et mihi grande decus (sim ignotus in ævum
Tum licet, externo penitusque inglorius orbi),
Si me flava comas legat Usa, et potor Alauni,
Vorticibusque frequens Abra, et nemus omne Treantæ,
Et Thamesis meus ante omnes, et fusca metallis
Tamara, et extremis me discant Orcades undis.
  Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni.
Hæc tibi servabam lenta sub cortice lauri,
Hæc, et plura simul; tum quæ mihi pocula Mansus,
Mansus, Chalcidicæ non ultima gloria ripæ[g],

[d] *Aut ad aquas Colni, aut ubi jugera Cassibelauni?*

The river Colne flows through Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, in Milton's neighbourhood. By "jugera Cassibelauni," we are to understand Verulam, or St. Albans, called the town of Cassibelan, an ancient British king. Milton's appellations are often conveyed by the poetry of ancient fable.—T. WARTON.

[e] *Tu mihi percurres medicos, tua gramina, succos.*

Deodate is the shepherd-lad in 'Comus,' ver. 619, &c.—T. WARTON.

[f] He hints his design of quitting pastoral, and the lighter kinds of poetry, to write an epic poem. This, it appears, by what follows, was to be on some part of the ancient British story.—T. WARTON.

[g] *Mansus, Chalcidicæ non ultima gloria ripæ.*

Manso, celebrated in the last poem, and a Neapolitan. A people called the Chalcidici are said to have founded Naples.—T. WARTON.

Bina dedit [h], mirum artis opus, mirandus et ipse,
Et circum gemino cælaverat argumento:
In medio rubri maris unda, et odoriferum ver,
Littora longa Arabum, et sudantes balsama silvæ:
Has inter phœnix, divina avis, unica terris,
Cæruleum fulgens diversicoloribus alis,
Auroram vitreis surgentem respicit undis:
Parte alia polus omnipatens, et magnus Olympus:
Quis putet? hic quoque Amor, pictæque in nube pharetræ,
Arma corusca faces, et spicula tincta pyropo;
Nec tenues animas, pectusque ignobile vulgi,
Hinc ferit; at, circum flammantia lumina torquens,
Semper in erectum spargit sua tela per orbes
Impiger, et pronos nunquam, collimat ad ictus:
Hinc mentes ardere sacræ, formæque deorum.
Tu quoque in his, nec me fallit spes lubrica, Damon,
Tu quoque in his certe es; nam quo tua dulcis abiret
Sanctaque simplicitas, nam quo tua candida virtus?
Nec te Lethæo fas quæsivisse sub Orco,
Nec tibi conveniunt lacrymæ, nec flebimus ultra:
Ite procul, lacrymæ, purum colit æthera Damon,
Æthera purus habet, pluvium pede reppulit arcum;
Heroumque animas inter, divosque perennes,
Æthereos haurit latices, et gaudia potat
Ore sacro. Quin tu, cœli post jura recepta,
Dexter ades, placidusque fave quicunque vocaris,
Seu tu noster eris Damon, sive æquior audis
Diodatus: quo te divino nomine cuncti
Cœlicolæ norint, silvisque vocabere Damon.
Quod tibi purpureus pudor, et sine labe juventus
Grata fuit, quod nulla tori libata voluptas;
En, etiam tibi virginei servantur honores [i].
Ipse, caput nitidum cinctus rutilante corona,
Lætaque frondentis gestans umbracula palmæ,
Æternum perages immortales hymenæos;
Cantus ubi, choreisque furit lyra mixta beatis,
Festa Sionæo bacchantur et orgia thyrso.

[h] *Bina dedit, &c.*

Perhaps a poetical description of two real cups thus richly ornamented, which Milton received as presents from Manso at Naples; or perhaps this is an allegorical description of some of Manso's favours.—T. Warton.

[i] *En, etiam tibi virginei servantur honores.*

Deodate and Lycidas were both unmarried.—T. Warton.

Dr. Johnson observes, that this poem is "written with the common but childish imitation of pastoral life:" yet there are some new and natural country images, and the common topics are often recommended by a novelty of elegant expression. The pastoral form is a fault of the poet's times. It contains also some passages which wander far beyond the bounds of bucolic song, and are in his own original style of the more sublime poetry. Milton cannot be a shepherd long. his own native powers often break forth, and cannot bear the assumed disguise.—T. Warton.

JAN. 23, 1646.

AD JOANNEM ROUSIUM, OXONIENSIS ACADEMIÆ BIBLIOTHECARIUM[j].

De libro Poematum amisso, quem ille sibi denuo mitti postulabat, ut cum aliis nostris in Bibliotheca publica reponeret, Ode.

Ode tribus constat Strophis, totidemque Antistrophis, una demum Epodo clausis; quas, tametsi omnes nec versuum numero, nec certis ubique colis exacte respondeant, ita tamen secuimus, commode legendi potius, quam ad antiquos concinendi modos rationem spectantes. Alioquin hoc genus rectius fortasse dici monostrophicum debuerat. Metra partim sunt *κατὰ σχέσιν*, partim *ἀπολελυμένα*. Phaleucia quæ sunt, spondæum tertio loco bis admittunt, quod idem in secundo loco Catullus ad libitum fecit.

GEMELLE cultu simplici gaudens liber, STROPHE 1.
Fronde licet gemina[k],
Munditieque nitens non operosa;
Quem manus attulit
Juvenilis olim,
Sedula tamen haud nimii poetæ;
Dum vagus Ausonias nunc per umbras,
Nunc Britannica per vireta lusit,
Insons populi[l], barbitoque devius
Indulsit patrio, mox itidem pectine Daunio[m]
Longinquum intonuit melos
Vicinis, et humum vix tetigit pede:
Quis te, parve liber, quis te fratribus ANTISTROPHE 1.
Subduxit reliquis dolo?
Cum tu missus ab urbe,
Docto jugiter obsecrante amico,
Illustre tendebas iter
Thamesis ad incunabula
Cærulei patris,
Fontes ubi limpidi

[j] John Rouse, or Russe, master of arts, fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, was elected chief librarian of the Bodleian, May 9, 1620. He died in April, 1652, and was buried in the chapel of his college. He lived on terms of the most intimate friendship with G. J. Vossius; by whom he was highly valued and respected for his learning and activity in promoting literary undertakings. Not only on account of his friendship with Milton, which appears to have subsisted in 1637, but because he retained his librarianship and fellowship during part of Cromwell's usurpation, we may suppose Rouse to have been puritanically inclined.—T. WARTON.

Wood informs us that Fairfax, Cromwell, &c., having been admitted to the degree of doctor of civil law, went, after the ceremony, to the Bodleian library, where they were received with a speech by the keeper Rouse, who prevented the plundering of Bodley's chest. He bequeathed twenty pounds to the library.—TODD.

[k] *Fronde licet gemina, &c.*

By "Fronde gemina," we are to understand, metaphorically, the "twofold leaf," the poems both English and Latin, of which the volume consisted. So the Bodleian manuscript, and printed copies: but *fronte* is perhaps a better reading.—T. WARTON.

[l] *Insons populi.*

Guiltless as yet of engaging in the popular disputes of these turbulent times.—T. WARTON.

[m] *Mox itidem pectine Daunio.*

His Italian Sonnets.—T. WARTON.

Aonidum, thyasusque sacer,
Orbi notus per immensos
Temporum lapsus redeunte cœlo,
Celeberque futurus in ævum?
Modo quis deus, aut editus deo, STROPHE 2.
Pristinam gentis miseratus indolem
(Si satis noxas luimus priores,
Mollique luxu degener otium),
Tollat nefandos civium tumultus [n],
Almaque revocet studia sanctus,
Et relegatas sine sede Musas
Jam pæne totis finibus Angligenum;
Immundasque volucres,
Unguibus imminentes,
Figat Apollinea pharetra,
Phineamque abigat pestem procul amne Pegaseo?
Quin tu, libelle, nuntii licet mala ANTISTROPHE 2.
Fide, vel oscitantia,
Semel erraveris agmine fratrum,
Seu quis te teneat specus,
Seu qua te latebra, forsan unde vili
Callo tereris institoris insuli,
Lætare felix: en, iterum tibi
Spes nova fulget, posse profundam
Fugere Lethen, vehique superam
In Jovis aulam, remige penna:
Nam te Roüsius sui STROPHE 3.
Optat peculi, numeroque justo
Sibi pollicitum queritur abesse;
Rogatque venias ille, cujus inclyta
Sunt data virum monumenta curæ:
Teque adytis etiam sacris
Voluit reponi, quibus et ipse præsidet,
Æternorum operum custos fidelis;
Quæstorque gazæ nobilioris,
Quam cui præfuit Ion [o],
Clarus Erectheides,
Opulenta dei per templa parentis;
Fulvosque tripodas, donaque Delphica;
Ion, Actæa genitus Creusa.

[n] *Tollat nefandos civium tumultus, &c.*

I fear Milton is here complaining of evils which his own principles contributed either to produce or promote: but his illustrations are so beautiful, that we forget his politics in his poetry. In reflecting, however, on those evils, I cannot entirely impute their origin to a growing spirit of popular faction: if there was anarchy on one part, there was tyranny on the other: the dispute was a conflict "between governors, who ruled by will, not by law; and subjects, who would not suffer the law itself to control their actions." Balguy's Sermons, p. 55.—T. WARTON.

[o] *Quam cui præfuit Ion, &c.*

Ion, the treasurer of the Delphic temple, abounding in riches.—T. WARTON.

ANTISTROPHE 3.

Ergo, tu visere lucos
Musarum ibis amœnos;
Diamque Phœbi rursus ibis in domum,
Oxonia quam valle colit,
Delo posthabita,
Bifidoque Parnassi jugo:
Ibis honestus,
Postquam egregiam tu quoque sortem
Nactus abis, dextri prece sollicitatus amici.
Illic legeris inter alta nomina
Auctorum, Graiæ simul et Latinæ
Antiquæ gentis lumina, et verum decus.

EPODOS.

Vos tandem, haud vacui mei labores,
Quicquid hoc sterile fudit ingenium,
Jam sero placidam sperare jubeo
Perfunctum invidia requiem, sedesque beatas,
Quas bonus Hermes,
Et tutela dabit solers Roüsi;
Quo neque lingua procax vulgi penetrabit, atque longe
Turba legentum prava facesset:
At ultimi nepotes,
Et cordatior ætas,
Judicia rebus æquiora forsitan
Adhibebit, integro sinu.
Tum, livore sepulto,
Si quid meremur sana posteritas sciet,
Roüsio favente.

THE END

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